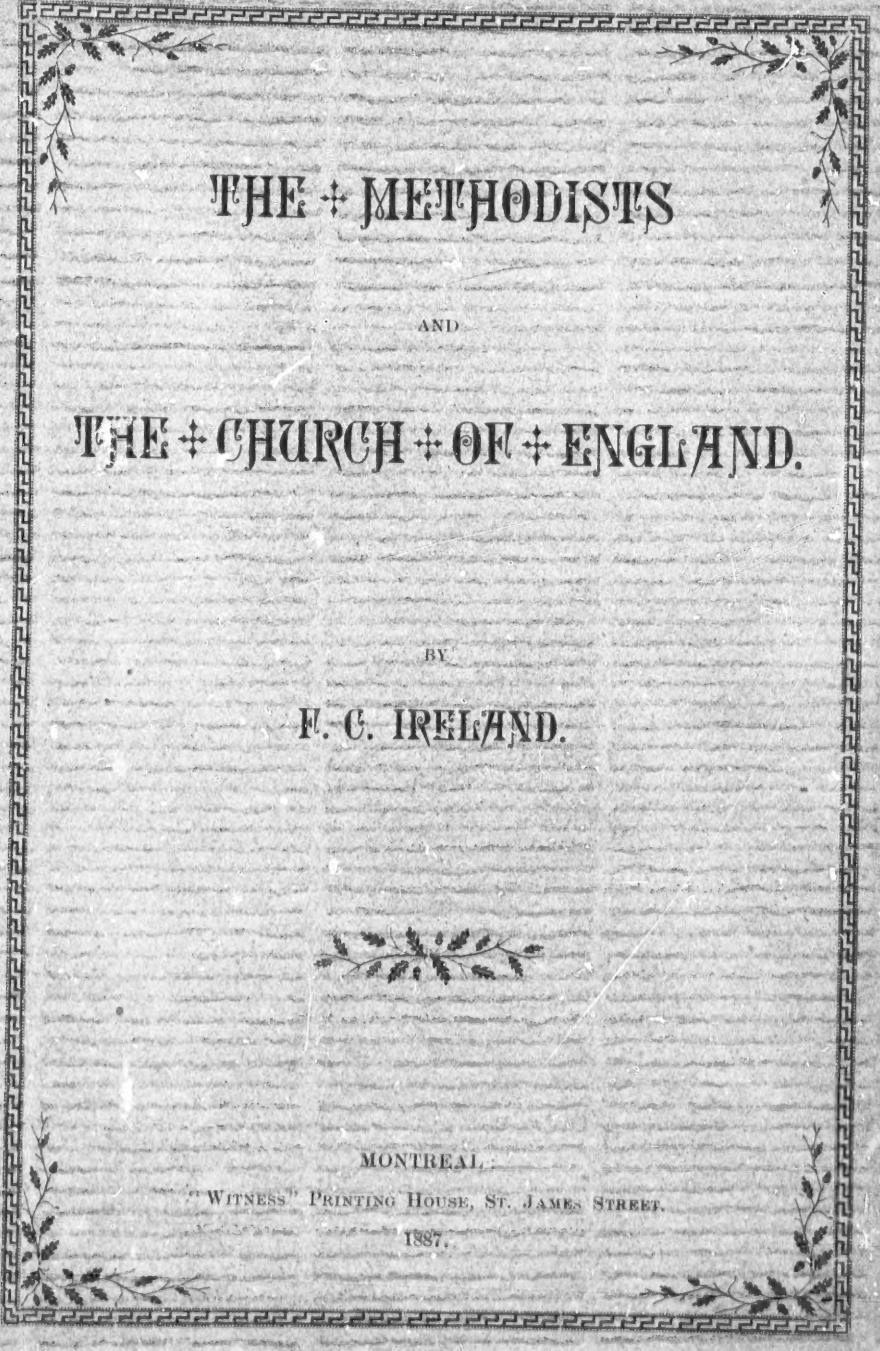




THE † METHODISTS

AND

THE † CHURCH † OF † ENGLAND.

BY

W. C. IRELAND.



MONTREAL:

"WITNESS" PRINTING HOUSE, ST. JAMES STREET.

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PREFACE.

There doubtless is a true church within every church, and true believers in the essential merits of God's redeeming love to be found scattered through all the various religious denominations of the present day ; and, while the subject treated in the following pages is in reference to the Methodists and the Church of England, there is no intention to disparage the one or unduly laud the other because of their various faults or excellencies, nor to overlook the good that has been accomplished by them both.

The main question is : Which system is the nearest to the Scriptural form of church government ? Is it one of unity or division ? Which is of Divine appointment or comes nearest to it ? This is a question which should interest everybody and its study recommends itself to all true Christian people. The writer does not aim at originality of thought or expression in the following pages, but makes free use of all the material within his reach, with such illustrations, inferences and remarks as have suggested themselves to his mind, at the same time keeping to facts which may have been overlooked by many, or not fully considered in the relationship in which they are now introduced.

THE METHODISTS AND THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

CHAPTER I.

Most persons who have seen the interior of Westminster Abbey must have appreciated the various beautiful paintings and ornaments of monumental grandeur that enrich the sacred edifice. The windows embellished with full-length paintings on glass of Moses and Aaron, the patriarchs, Christ and the Apostles, with every here and there in the naves and transepts and on the walls are works of art of a high classical character, sculptured in marble as monuments to the illustrious dead. Among them and prominently placed on the wall of one of the principal parts of the Abbey is a medallion on which are embossed the faces of John and Charles Wesley, the first great preacher and singer of Methodism, but who both lived and died loyal members of the Church of England which embraces and has always permitted several schools of thought within its broad domain of catholic brotherhood. John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, was an extraordinary man, of deep learning, amazing zeal, some force of genius and devoutly pious. He searched to the foundation for Scriptural truths and the divine form as a model for success in his work of evangelization. He found the first Christian Church was established by the Apostles of Christ at Jerusalem and governed by them, but their government induced most active labor, so that they visited every available country for the purpose of planting churches and carry-

ing on the great work committed to them by their Head and Master who said "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Wesley appeared to be actuated by the principle that to achieve great success, there was need of great labor. He likewise continually maintained the doctrines, forms and general principles of the primitive church, which, he declared, were embodied in the Church of England. On one occasion, when Methodism was about twenty years old, a clergyman by the name of Ingham said to him, "God is with you of a truth and so he will be with you, while you continue in the Church, but whenever the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them." Some time after this, Mr. Ingham left the church himself and turned all the societies under his care into congregations of Independents. Twenty years afterwards, Mr. Wesley referred to the prediction of Ingham when he was urging upon his people the necessity of continued loyalty to the church, and said "What was the event? The same as Mr. Ingham foretold: they rapidly dwindled to nothing."

Mr. Wesley unhesitatingly condemned the action of his colleagues, Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Cudworth, Mr. Maxfield and the school of Trevecka, who left him and the Church of England, and finally endured the fate of Mr. Ingham's prediction. After forty years' experience, Mr. Wesley said in his sermon on the occasion of laying the corner stone of City-road Chapel, "This is the peculiar glory of Methodists: however convenient it might be, they will not on any account or pretence whatever, form a distinct sect or party. Let no one rob you of this glorying, I trust no one will as long as I live." He on that occasion affirmed his belief that the Church of England came nearer the Scriptural and primitive type than any other national church on earth. Again he says "from principle we will remain

what we always have been, true members of the Church of England." He says of those who left, "they conversed much with dissenters and contracted strong prejudices against the Church and then totally separated from us." He always maintained that he was not accountable for those who left. He further says "The Methodists weighed the matter at first and upon mature deliberation determined to continue in the Church. They have not wanted temptations of every kind to alter their resolution, they have heard abundance said on the subject, perhaps all that could be said, they have read the writings of the most eminent pleaders of separation, they have spent several days in a general conference upon this very subject of separating from the established Church, but still they could see no sufficient cause to depart from their first resolution, so that their fixed purpose is to continue in the Church."

This good man died in 1791. His last prayer a few minutes before he died, was this, "We thank Thee, O Lord, for these and all thy mercies; bless the Church and King; and grant us truth and peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord, for ever and ever"; and then, after saying repeatedly, "The best of all is God is with us," he said "Farewell" and died. The significance of those words "God is with us" can only be understood in connection with the prediction of Mr. Ingham, "If you leave the Church, God will leave you." The impression which that prediction had made upon Mr. Wesley's mind is seen all through his life and in his death. It did not refer so much to the nominal separation from the Established Church as to the effect that separation would have upon the form and method which would unquestionably be introduced as a consequence of leaving the Church. Raising the anchor permits the ship to sail and when out at the mercy of

the winds, without an experienced commander, there is danger. Leaving the well-known chartered course for new and apparently clearer waters may for many trips prove successful, and from the confidence gained by such success, lead to further changes which eventually prove that the old principles and practice of a tried course have been so imperceptibly departed from, that danger is ahead ; the signal may be given, but too late, and the vessel becomes a wreck. Leaving the Church, the Church which, from all his studies, labors, successes and experience, he maintained was the primitive and Apostolic Church, ordained of God ; to leave this Church was to leave the primitive form, the Apostolically ordained, God-honoring and soul-saving means which for the centuries had been an anchor in times of danger, or a beacon light by which safety was secured, and the traducers of the Gospel set at naught. With a full conviction of all the facts, with the experience before him of so many who had left the Church and come to naught on the shoals of indifference, rocks of skepticism and sand-bars of independence, he adhered with an unflinching hold to the form of sound words, the form of rule, method, doctrine and practice which was the glory, safety, strength and perpetuity of the Established Church, and in his last hours could say as one of the uppermost things on his mind "The best of all is God is with us."

When Methodism was established in the United States, the same precaution was maintained to preserve the anchor of safety. At the Conference of the societies held in Baltimore, in 1780, there is found this question in the minutes :

"Shall we continue in close connection with the Church and press our people to a closer connection with her?" Answer, "Yes." In the same minutes there is this question "Will this Conference grant the

privilege to all the friendly Clergy of the Church of England, at the request or desire of the people, to preach or administer the ordinances in our preaching-houses or chapels?" Answer, "Yes." Both in England and in America Mr. Wesley maintained during his life that the Methodist Societies were not a church. The language he invariably held was "I am of no sect but the Church of England." Some two years after Mr. Wesley's death, a Conference was held at Leeds and an address to the members of the societies throughout England was published, in which the following is found: "Our venerable father, who is gone to his great reward, lived and died a member and friend of the Church of England," also this, "We entreat our societies at large to continue, as usual, in connection with the Church of England; and we shall, with great cheerfulness and contentment, labor with them according to that simple original plan of Methodism, established and left us by our venerable friend."

From the quotations above given it is clearly recognized that Wesley began his labors and continued them throughout his lengthened evangelical life, with the hope and desire of reviving religion within the Establishment; that he prosecuted his work, gathered the fruits of his ministry into societies, employed lay preachers, built chapels and even introduced a financial organization, all within the pale of the Church as a great leaven of righteousness to leaven the whole Establishment.

It is for the unprejudiced thinking-man to judge whether Wesley was right or not in his enlightened godly judgment of the Scripturally organized form of the Church of England, and of his carefully studied practice of not holding meetings so as to interfere with the Church's regular services and urging his followers to receive the Sacraments at the Parish Churches. In

a recent issue of the *Pall Mall Gazette*, a "Wesleyan Minister" states distinctly "that only within memory his connexion has ceased to recognize the National Church, as entitled to allegiance and has assumed to itself the rights and privileges of a distinct ecclesiastical authority."

Mr. Wesley seemed to consider the words of Ingham as a mighty fundamental truth, "If you leave the Church, God will leave you" for in a letter he wrote to his brother, quite late in life, are these words. "One thing only occurs to me now which might prevent in a great measure the mischiefs which will probably ensue after our death, and that is, much greater care and deliberation in admitting preachers. Let us pray God to show us if this has not been the cause *why so many of our preachers have lamentably miscarried*. Ought any new preacher to be received before we know that he is *grounded* in the doctrines we teach, *particularly* in the Communion of the Church of England, and should we not be well assured that he is no enemy to the Church."

To sum up Mr. Wesley's position. He charged the Methodists not to leave the Church, even though they thought their minister's life or doctrine were bad. He loved the Church Service and preferred it to all others; observed the Feasts and Fasts, Attended church even when he expected an unedifying sermon, and read the Church Service before preaching. Required the Society to attend Church constantly and to receive the Holy Communion there, and urged them to do so even if they did not esteem their minister. Spoke from his own experience and that of another's of the great blessings obtained in going to church, and described the loss which he said some persons had sustained by not doing so. Would not let the Methodists hold their meetings in church hours as he considered that

“this would be a formal separation from the Church ;” showed how experience proved that the adoption of this course would not benefit the Society ; enforced his rule on this point as strictly as he could. Knew the sin of dissent ; on principle refused to go to Dissenting meetings, or allow the Methodists to go to them. Lost some members of his Society by his strict rules with regard to the Church Service. Disowned those who separated from the Church as having been influenced by Dissenters, and having no connection with him, and implied that for the most part they had not been regular members of the Society. Complained that these “Seceders and mongrel Methodists” did not help, but rather impeded his work. Traced the failure of Methodism in some places to disloyalty to the Church, and its success in other places to the adherence of the members to it. Declared that if his preachers administered the sacraments, they would by that act recant their connection with Methodism, and commit the sin of Korah, Dathan and Abiram. Took steps to prevent separation from the Church. Reported the decisions of eight Conferences in favor of continuing in the Church, and with regard to each of them said and implied that the decision was unanimous.



CHAPTER II.

When the traveller is weary with fatigue and satiated with the magnificence of the interior splendors of Westminster Abbey it is a relief to stroll out into St. James Park and along the Serpentine, passing Buckingham Palace, through Green Park, Hyde Park, through gateways and archways of pleasing variety of change in scene at every step and then sit down to pause, rest and reflect in some shady bower, where nature and art combine to give pleasure to the mind ; but the constant whirl and bustle of the passing thousands often deprive one of the luxuries of a quiet reflective moment as the fashionable world diverts attention whether one wills or not. People are affected by a change of scene and circumstances in more ways than can be accounted for, and so, after the good Mr. Wesley was laid to rest in the grounds of City Road Chapel, the Methodists went abroad to their labors, but soon found themselves carried away with thirsting desires for the removal of every restriction to their religious progress. They had the same vital religious zeal, but no one thoroughly versed in the disputed point of Church discipline or ecclesiastical law. They felt the stirring of a power within to carry them on, and they wished to attain all the prerogatives necessary to accomplish their object. Mr. Wesley had not organized any particular system of Church government which was designed to be outside the pale of the Church of England ; his chief organization was into Societies for evangelization purposes and to lead the people to experience inward godliness and the practice of outward holiness and he acted as founder, father and ruling head of the whole body. It is urged that when

he appointed the Legal Hundred and gave them the power of appointing preachers to the Methodist chapels, he gave the Ministers permanent and supreme authority. This is readily admitted, but that authority was limited to the exercise of the doctrines, rules and regulations which he had prepared and bequeathed to them as Societies within the Church of England. To build chapels, appoint preachers, and carry on according to his plan, the work of evangelizing within the Church, without leaving the Church and forming a new sect, which he had all through his long life earnestly labored to prevent. His was a Connexion, not a Church. If it had been the intention of Wesley to form a Church, he had strong and numerous inducements to do so. It was never his design, and he had a design which was well matured, distinctive and regular. Throughout the whole history of Methodism under the authority of Wesley there were evidences of the guiding and sustaining hand of God. This was apparent all through and some times remarkably distinct. His design was to have Methodism continue as a connexion. The first Conference after his death this question was put: "Is it necessary to enter into any engagements in respect to our future plan of economy?" The answer was: "We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us at his death." The word "economy" meaning the management, regulation and government of the Societies; for at the same Conference this question was also asked: "What regulations are necessary for the preservation of our whole economy as Mr. Wesley left it?" and the answer was given at length in keeping with the old plan. One of the peculiarities of Mr. Wesley's plan was the adoption of the use of a "ticket" of membership. Had he formed a Church, he would not have required the use of any ticket or token of membership of that description. These tickets

were very diverse not only in their form but also in their style. Some were plain while others were remarkable specimens of art for that period and are very interesting and beautiful. The artistic pictures used on the tickets were finally abandoned and a simple, uniform, plain ticket adopted and supplied to all the Societies. It seems like a strange anomaly for Methodists in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century still to hold the ticket system when they are recognized as possessing all the civil and legal rights of a Church. The use of the tickets, however, is gradually falling into disfavor and another of the peculiarities of the old plan will likely soon be abandoned. Mr. Wesley foresaw that changes would take place after his death in the economy of the Societies ; and, at the first Conference after his death, there were some preachers whose grasping for power was so intense that they could not conceal their desire to break loose from the restraints which their great founder had thrown into the Methodist polity. The laity of this time also felt that they were not in possession of the privileges to which a member of a mature and complete Church had an undoubted right to ; and some of them were ready to join the preachers whose desire was to gain more power and become a church, so that at the next Conference, in the following year, the agitation, having been kept constantly moving by printed circulars and other means, soon bore fruit. The "Old Plan" to keep the Societies in union with the Church was denounced by the agitators, and chief stress was laid on the question of administering the sacraments. At the third Conference after Mr. Wesley's death the President went so far as to say : "At present we have really no government." This led to grave discussions ; and later on the same President said : "I care not a rush whether our form of government be Episcopal or Presbyterian,

I believe neither of them to be purely Scriptural ; but our preachers and people in general are prejudiced against the latter ; if the former will answer our end we ought to embrace it." There were many clergymen of the Church of England in the Societies who had authority to administer the sacraments, and where these were not present the people were to take the Sacrament in the Established Church which was Mr Wesley's plan. The agitation grew stronger and stronger. Printed circulars were distributed by different parties to advocate the claims of each. Then conciliatory measures were introduced. The " Old Plan " was departed from in certain cases in order to maintain the union and concord of the Societies. The Lord's Supper was not to be administered where the union and concord of the Society could be maintained without it. Preaching in Church, hours was prohibited except in very special cases. In this way the anchor was gradually lifted and the Methodists found themselves afloat and drifting about at the mercy of the winds of theorists inexperienced in Church government, anxiously desiring to form a Church ; so much so that even their President said he did not *care a rush* which form was adopted, which expression, to say, the least was not as dignified as some might expect from a person in his position. One step after another was taken which led the Methodists away from the Church of England, regardless of the prediction which Wesley never lost sight of : " If you leave the Church God will leave you."

When the Conference of 1795 assembled, measures were proposed for the adjustment of existing differences. The Societies were so divided in sentiment, the debates so earnest and varied, the party lines so distinctly drawn, and the contentions so violent, that a day was appointed for fasting and prayer for guidance

after which a committee of nine was chosen by ballot to draw up a plan of pacification, as it was called. This was the first real separation from the Church of England that the Methodist Societies supported by ecclesiastical resolutions regularly adopted, and yet to look at the "Plan of Pacification," is enough to convince any one that it was scrupulously designed to conform as much as possible to the Established Church, for there are these clauses in the "Plan ;" "We agree that the Lord's Supper be administered among us on Sunday evenings only ; except where a majority of stewards and leaders desire it in Church hours, or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parochial Churches."

"The Lord's Supper shall always be administered in England according to the form of the Established Church."

"Wherever Divine Service is performed in England on the Lord's day in Church-hours, the officiating preacher shall read the service of the Established Church, our venerable father's abridgement, or, at least, the lessons appointed by the Calendar."

It is clearly seen, then, that the Methodists did not intend to leave the rubrics of the Church nor its doctrines ; but this first authorized step of separation only lifted the anchor which when once raised permitted the vessel to drift away upon the open sea of difficulty to run its chance of securing a safe harbor somewhere, or being wrecked in its latitudinarian course, which course contains more unseen rocks than inexperienced commanders are generally aware of.

To sum up Mr. Wesley's position from the real facts of history. In 1777, in laying the foundation of City Road Chapel, Mr. Wesley said in his sermon :

“The Methodists know their calling. They weighed the matter at first, and, upon mature deliberation, determined to continue in the church. Since that time they have not wanted temptations of every kind to alter their resolution. They have heard abundance said upon the subject, perhaps all that could be said. They have read the writings of the most eminent pleaders for separation, both in the last and the present century. They have spent several days in a general conference upon this very question, ‘Is it *expedient* to separate from the Established Church?’ But still they could see no sufficient cause to depart from their first resolution.” Then further on in the same sermon he said : “That we do not, will not form any separate sect, but continue from principle to remain what we always have been, true members of the Church of England.” He had been then a Methodist for nearly forty years. Then to come down to two years after his death. The Conference assembled at Leeds sent out an address to the Methodist Societies throughout England, which commenced as follows : “Dear brethren,—We feel it our duty to send you this address, lest the insinuations of any who are enemies to our prosperity and unity should grieve your minds and injure the work of God. Our venerable father who is gone to his great reward, lived and died a member and friend of the Church of England.” Then further on in that same address are these words : “But we entreat our societies at large to continue as usual in connection with the Church of England, and we shall, with great cheerfulness and contentment, labor among them according to that simple original plan of Methodism established and left us by our venerable friend.” The “History of Wesleyan Methodism,” written by George Smith, L.L.D., F.A.S., London, 1858, volume 2, page 8, says : “Wesley, as his con-

duct proved, was conscientiously attached to the Church of England, and to the end of his days regarded himself as one of her most devoted sons. As such, he availed himself of his position to induce his preachers and people to follow his example." The above history was a text book 25 years ago for candidates to the Methodist ministry. These are some of the *real facts* of history, and Wesley's own words, which prove beyond dispute that he never left the Church.

CHAPTER III.

The departure from the solid foundation of the Church as described in the foregoing chapter soon gave rise to questions relating to the removal of all restraints. The agitators had gained even more than they expected, and were satisfied to receive the "Plan of Pacification" as a first instalment of what they wanted. In the course of two years later there were steps taken to revise the rules drawn up and left by Mr. Wesley. This was considered by some necessary and essential to the existence of Methodism; and it resulted in several prominent preachers leaving the main body and forming the New Connexion Methodists. The new regulations adopted by the Conference of 1797, sacrifices were made respecting authority, in order to satisfy some who were uneasy and grasping for power but not only so, but provision was made for other changes and the greater part of the executive government was put into the hands of the preachers, under

certain conditions which only opened the door to wide differences of opinion in regard to what properly constitutes a Scriptural Church, with ecclesiastical status equal to that occupied by any other denomination. The changes thus made in the Methodist economy after Mr. Wesley's death, although intended to confer a great boon upon the Societies by giving them additional privileges, actually resulted in the creation of a multitude of sects opposed to each other in some instances as bitterly as if they were pagans instead of Christians. The Methodists did not at this time nor until many years after assume the title of the Methodist Church, though their position might have fairly entitled them to that distinction as much then as now. As the years rolled by, the Methodist Societies became known as the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the New Connexion Methodist Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, the Bible Christian Church, the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, the Methodist Episcopal Church of Canada and numerous other Churches; but the increase of members which was becoming marvelously large during the last few years of Mr. Wesley's life, under his authority and in connection with the Church of England, did not keep up the ratio which it then assumed, except it may be in the United States where the Methodist Church was established by Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, and continued more in conformity with the Established Church of England, especially in its Episcopal form. There were those who predicted that, with the death of its founder, Methodism would crumble into ruins and disappear. Many good men shared to some extent in these apprehensions; but Methodism has not disappeared, though it has not progressed in the same ratio that it did before assuming the position of an independent Church nor as rapidly as the Salvation Army

which has not assumed the position of becoming distinctively a Church.

The fact is, Methodism for many years after its founder's death was under an influence which took a generation or two to destroy. It had an inner structure based on the solid foundation of teachings and principles gathered for ages from the Church of England ; and all the preachers, whether they studied in the College or at home, in the schools or in the saddle, had to study Wesley's writings, Pearson's, Butler's, Horne's, Whateley's, Watson's, Clarke's and other writers, many of whom were prominent Church men, and all in harmony with the Church. The influence of these men stamped the solid principles of an ecclesiastical system which built up the inner structure in the lives of the greatest scholars Methodism possessed. As the course of study gradually changed it left more room for jarring interests, divisions of opinion and conflicting plans and purposes. The changes succeed each other in quick succession until the Church of England is looked upon as unworthy of consideration, and the Prayer Book which Wesley held so sacred, and the form of Divine Service which he so reverently maintained, are entirely ignored by tens of thousands of Methodists. It is worth while here to notice some of the changes that have gradually taken place in Methodism. In a Discipline published in Canada in 1836, about fifty years ago, there is in the temporal economy this rule laid down. Question—"Is anything advisable in regard to building?" Answer—"Let our Churches be built plain and decent, and with free seats, but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable ; otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so we must be dependent on them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to Methodist discipline, if

not doctrine too." In another Discipline published in Canada in 1874 the section regarding the same question is answered as follows: "Let our Churches be built plain and decent, and not more expensive than is absolutely necessary." It is now proverbial among the Methodist people to complain of Church debts which are even harassing the rich men who have become a necessity to them. The spiritual life of the Methodists has in many instances been sorely tried by the departure from that wise temporal economy laid down by Wesley in regard to Church building. Besides, it is a serious question with many whether it is not a wilful waste of money used for worldly aggrandizement which might be employed in Missionary purposes where it is so much required.

Although the Discipline retains part of the form of the Church of England for administering the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, there are very few of the Methodist ministers who follow it, but repeat over extempore prayers and words far different from those laid down in the book. It is even customary for some to omit the words "The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for *thee*, preserve thy *soul* and *body* unto everlasting life, Take and eat, etc.," and the proper words for presenting the cup, and use a verse of a hymn or text of Scripture which may at the time come into the mind. In this way there is a painful absence of method and form which gives rise to the impression that there is no form, but everyone is left to adopt his own plan. Others will repeat over the proper form on beginning the administration of the Sacrament, and then omit the remainder of it, and use other words.

There has been considerable change made also in the care of the children, as seen by the Discipline of 1636 and that of 1874. In the former, it was a rule

that where there were ten children whose parents would allow it, they would be met once a week and instructed by the preachers, who should also talk to them at home and to their parents, form them into classes and appoint leaders to instruct them in the preacher's absence. The latter specifies the children of the congregation, whom he shall instruct ; but the following rules which the old Discipline contains are very materially changed. "Explain and impress (the catechism) upon their hearts."

"Talk with them every time you see any of them at home." "Meet them an hour once a week." Such were the old rules definitely laid down. Mr. Wesley looked after the children personally and every preacher under him had to do the same according to his rules. It is now a common thing for Methodist children to join any Church they incline towards ; and many of them, and ministers' children too, are going back to the Church of England, or joining other religious bodies. There are changes also in the mode of stationing the ministers. Formerly this was practically done by a Stationing Committee at the Conference ; and every preacher was obliged to go where he was sent whether to the City Church or the back woods Circuit. The Stations are nominally made still in the same way ; but practically the Stations are made months beforehand in reply to "calls" by certain congregations to certain preachers ; and this gives rise to considerable disapproval. The itinerancy being maintained and the limit of three years fixed by which a minister is to remain in the Church, there is a continual uneasiness on the part of both preacher and people in many instances, regarding their next appointment. Some ministers, conscientiously adhere to the old rule of allowing the Stationing Committee to send them where they believe Providence designed them to go ; others,

who notice that their brethren who look out sharply for themselves generally obtain the best places, are beginning to lose confidence not in the old rule but in the departure from it, which makes it a necessity for everyone to look out for himself. What other changes will soon have to be introduced in this connection is hard to determine. One recently adopted is the change of the Apostle's Creed, "He descended into hell," being left out. Change after change has been made, similar to those seen in our civil provincial and national governments, and every change necessitates others and leads many people to conclude the Church to be no better than a human institution founded upon laws made by human beings instead of answering to the definition. "The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered according to Christ's ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same." The Church of God in the dark ages grew less and less lustrous, useful and appreciative, owing to constant changes that were introduced, and consequently the light nearly went out until the dawn of Reformation commenced, when an established Church was set upon the old foundation, which ever since has continued to grow brighter and holier.



CHAPTER IV.

The changes already referred to have brought about what Mr. Wesley so strongly ruled against, as "softness and needless self-indulgence," and which so grieved one of the old school Methodist ministers (the Rev. Dr. M——), that he used the following language in Toronto, recently, at a meeting for the examination of candidates for the Ministry, "Here, in Ontario, there are so many ministers that they are treading upon each other's toes. What, in God's name," he asked, "are they doing? Engineering socials, apron concerts, and nursing babies that weighed from ninety to two hundred pounds. There was something fearfully wrong. Instead of contenting themselves with comfortable circuits and pulling the wires for bigger salaries, they should go forth into the mission fields; for, in Ontario, five or six ministers were doing the work which should be done by one with the assistance of the laity." It is well known that, in Wesley's time, and for half a century later, the Methodist cause was largely promoted by the aid of what he styled local preachers and exhorters, or, in Church of England language, lay readers. Some of these were, no doubt, very useful, and generally acceptable to the congregations, but of late years it is a very rare case when a local preacher takes an appointment to preach, especially in larger churches. As we have seen, the old rule of not building expensive churches and not renting pews has become obsolete. The manner of preaching has also changed. Churches dedicated to solemn religious services are used in many places for social gatherings, some of which are theatrical in their

nature, for tea-meetings, lectures and trifling gatherings, which create in the minds of the young people a lack of reverence for sacred and divine things, and which tend to unsettle the mind, and to engender a looseness and do-as-you-please sort of life. In Toronto, the large Metropolitan Church was thrown open on a Sunday evening for a lecture at 25 cents per head, and was filled to overflowing, when rounds of cheers and applause were indulged in by the people in that Methodist sanctuary. Dancing and card-playing were diversions by no means tolerated among Methodists even a quarter of a century ago; but now there are a good many members who fail to see that these diversions are injurious to their spiritual life. There are arguments introduced in favor of a suspension of the rule, or of its present bearings, which so many violate, and as this agitation has begun it will, no doubt, lead to some change, while Wesley's simple rule was "The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus." This rule, which most people would consider sufficiently explicit, is added to by a change in the discipline of 1874, and the following explanation given "which should be understood to prohibit our people from giving any countenance to card-playing or dancing." This explanation is now questioned in public print, and the legislative authority of the Church is asked to decide the matter. It appears that under the original rule there was but little countenance given to these diversions; but when the rule from the above explanation was made prohibitive of the diversions which it specifies, they began to grow in favor with the members whose practices were annoying to those who kept the old rule for conscience sake. Another change in Methodism is practically, if not constitutionally, effected, that is, the duty of each member to attend

class-meeting. The discipline strictly insists on regular attendance ; and those who wilfully and repeatedly absent themselves are to be excluded from the Society, now the Church. Yet there is such laxity in practice, that persons are continuous members of the Methodist Church who never meet in class. This change in practice causes many to consider the rule optional, and the attendance at class simply one of choice. So much is this becoming the case, that adherence to the rule is now chiefly urged on the ground of the great spiritual advantages to be derived from it.

The custom of fasting, especially on Good Friday and each Friday before quarterly meeting, was one very generally practised by the early Methodists, and strongly urged by all the preachers ; but now it is seldom there is heard any announcement that such and such a day is one of fasting and prayer. It was, and is still, a disciplinary injunction for the preachers to fast and use abstinence every week as much as their strength will permit, and yet very few of them do it. Another serious change in administration that is slowly gaining ground, is that reports may be in circulation, and be even well-founded against a member or preacher in regard to the violation of doctrine, discipline, or moral rectitude, and no action be taken against the delinquent until a formal charge containing specifications is presented, and a demand made for his trial. This practice crept into the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States at one time, but was checked by the good Bishop Hedding, in 1866, when he declared that, "As the minister was held responsible for the state and character of the church, he should institute an inquiry respecting the truth of the reports circulated against anyone, and if he found reason to believe there was just cause of complaint, he was bound to proceed to examine and try the case, as the

discipline directs, without waiting for a formal accusation." The change in the discipline regarding the spirit and truth of singing is very marked. Wesley had sixteen excellent rules by which the singing was authoritatively regulated ; but the new rules are reduced to ten ; and, to indicate how much the Methodists have departed from their founder's views, the new rules close with this latitudinarian sanction : "The singing and all parts of public worship are under the control and direction of the Superintendent of the Circuit." Since the adoption of this new rule various new tune-books, hymns, and any form of worship which the preacher may choose to introduce can be practised with authority ; and, as the Superintendent of the Circuit is only permitted to remain three years in the circuit, his successor may with equal authority adopt other books and tunes, and forms of worship, and so keep the people continuously changing, and put them to unnecessary expense and trouble, which is often the case. Owing to that new rule, many preachers omit the use of the Lord's Prayer, and prayer also for the Queen ; and in many instances, prayer is omitted altogether at the close of the service, and the people dismissed simply by pronouncing the benediction. The form of the benediction has also changed. The words "all parts of public worship" in the new rule give preachers a license to preach almost anything that comes into their heads ; and, consequently, some of them go very far in the line of "cant" expressions, trifling anecdotes, and irreverent gestures, snapping the fingers, etc., but, when expostulated with on the subject, can point to their authority in the new rule. Not only is this the case in preaching, but in the solemn prayers, there is a marked contrast between the prayers of the early Methodist preachers and those now generally used. Formerly,

owing to so many having been familiar with the Collects and carefully worded and Scripturally-composed prayers of the Prayer Book, although they used extempore prayers, their prayers were composed chiefly of the language of the prayers and collects of the Church of England ; but, now, scarcely a vestige of the language contained in the Prayer Book can be found in the modern prayers of Methodists. To show how far some have gone, the following is an illustration of the new kind of prayers and service brought about by the constant alteration, amendments, and change in the forms of religious worship. Mr. Wesley condemned long *fowling* prayers, but here is a quotation from the report of a service held by a prominent Methodist minister in Toronto, whose prayers are proverbially long and peculiar :—

“In the long prayer he prayed for every department of the Church in all its relations, from the occupant of the pulpit down, and the sexton was not forgotten. He prayed that all may get away from the idea that the sexton is nobody, a small man, somebody the Church looks down upon. He prayed also for the ushers, because they had much to bear from cross-grained pewholders who did not want anybody to enter their pews. They had also to bear with black looks, unkind words and painful humiliation.”

When prayer and other parts of a religious service are left to the caprices of uneducated men, even though sincere and godly men, there is danger of irreverence in language and voice, and such prayers must do more harm than good, and it would be a thousand times better to adhere to a form of prayer in good sacred style than extempore prayers such as the above and many others still more ridiculous.

This decay of old faiths, unrest and uneasiness to produce change, is bringing Methodism into a transi-

tion state which is liable to turn materialistic. There are republican tendencies marked by a restless and inquisitive activity, no one man caring to bind himself down to any particular creed or form, but to have full liberty to do what is for the best, according to his own individualism, in the Christian Church. When the rules of a church, or any other organization, are so made as to give full liberty to one individual to control as he chooses in his congregation, and there are thousands of these, there must be a vast diversity of practice. Its itinerant system is one of change that has its advantages; but the question arises: Does the system not lead to a disposition for incessant change in other things as well as stations?

CHAPTER V.

Although the doctrines of Methodism have undergone no constitutional change, the change in discipline and rules by which "all parts of public worship are under the control of the Superintendent of the Circuit," allows him a wide latitude in the pulpit, as preaching is certainly a part of public worship, and so many of the doctrines are singularly handled. Another result of change is, that, whereas in the early days of Methodism constant acquisitions were made to the Society from the rank and file of the Church of England and the various denominations of religious bodies, as well as from the world of ungodly people, and chiefly from the later source, the acquisitions now come chiefly from

the families of Methodists themselves. This is the great harvest field of Methodists at the present day, and it is an ominous fact that every year there are Methodist Ministers, members of the families of Methodist Ministers and members from among the laity are joining the Church of England, while formerly it was the reverse. Many of these are the most educated, intelligent and pious who have found upon examination, that the doctrines, discipline and worship of the Church of England are nearer the old Wesleyan system, than that in practice by the Methodists of the present day. They also realize a pure Gospel style of preaching, and the doctrines of repentance, conversion, faith and sanctification are proclaimed and insisted upon as necessary to salvation. The Scriptural method of treating these subjects, and the solemnly reverent manner of conducting the service, command attention and respect, which stirs up the heart towards God, and desires for a better and more useful life.

In the early history of the settlement of the United States and Canada, the first settlers were no sooner located in their new homes than the Methodist preachers were in the field looking after the spiritual interests of the pioneers. It is different to-day, especially in parts of the Dominion of Canada where the early settlers had only Methodist preachers, clerical and lay, to feed them with spiritual food ; now they are supplied by other denominations, as the Methodists have left them. In looking over the census returns of the North-West Territories, as published in 1885, and considering that part of the Dominion a great Mission field not only among the Indians but the white people who have settled there, the number of Methodist Churches is only eleven and total membership 6,910, while the Church of England has nineteen Churches a membership of 9,976 and

the Presbyterians have eighteen Churches and a membership of 7,712. In taking a look at the Mission field in the East, the parish of Heart's Content in New Foundland shows by the census of 1885, the following membership of the

	Church of England.	Wesleyans.
Silly Cove	446	299
Turk's Cove.....	17	..
Vitter's Cove. }	458	21
New Perlican. }		
Heart's Content	1,000	90
Heart's Desire	27	..
Heart's Delight.....	365	21
Island Cove	66	..
Brook Cove	5	..
Shoal Harbor.....	75	36
Total.....	2,458	467

While the Methodists are using every effort to gain the Cities, the Church of England of to-day is doing the same work that was started by John Wesley a century and a half ago. The great success of the Church of England to-day is proof that it contains all the machinery for evangelistic work that the world needs, and it contains only the same machinery that it did many centuries ago. It has, and always had the means of lay workers and this was a part that Wesley put in motion with a whirl and a hum, that was felt throughout the whole world. While properly managed and controlled by the authority of the Church, this part of the machinery turned out an astonishing amount of good. This part is now being neglected by the Methodists, but made hum and whirl by the Church of England. John Wesley started also with renewed speed the long rested clergy. His preachers like himself realized the need of work—and work, work, work, was the order of the day for all Methodist preachers. At 5 o'clock in the morning there was a service and so on during the day, every day, as well as Sunday.

Pastoral visiting, teaching the children, and every kind of work was attended to except engineering socials, donations, garden parties, apron parties and such like diversions. The Church of England to-day are running their machinery at full speed. We know some of the clergy to preach three times on Sunday and drive thirty to forty miles. They visit from house to house, hold prayer meetings, teach the children, talk to the drunken to reform them, hold temperance meetings, fast and hold special services for the spiritual growth of the people, and preach conversion and all the fundamental doctrines as faithfully as any God-sent Ministers in the world. This is all indicative of the fact that Methodists might have remained in the Church of England, and carried on the special work which providence called them to do. What responsibility they have for the 200 religious sects now in England is difficult to determine ; but it is evident to any student of Church history that upon the severance of the tie that bound Methodism to the Church there sprang up, and have continued to spring up, sect after sect, each having some special claim to superiority over others.

The changes that have crept into Methodism grew very slowly at first, and in some instances laid hold of the people almost unconsciously. After the anchor was lifted, they tried hard to keep as near the old course as possible but gradually drifted farther and farther from the established buoys that marked the channel, and from the beacon lights along the shore, until they drifted far out on the unknown sea. There were many enquiries "whither are we drifting," which only served to create new channels, and so one course after another was adopted on the unknown sea of difficulty. To witness a congregation nowadays, as soon as the benediction is pronounced, or even before

it is finished, bustling about and leaving pews, without a moments solemn pause after religious service indicates the irreverence which many cannot see without some degree of surprise and pain. Then commences a general criticism of the sermon, prayers, singing, or other parts of the service under the sole control of the preacher, owing to the changes which all cannot agree to, and about which they, consequently, give expression to their views as soon as opportunity is afforded. This criticism and fault-finding, which are now so largely indulged in by almost every congregation to some degree, are having a baneful effect upon the minds of young people who are not accustomed to any set form of religious service under the establishment of what they understand to be an Apostolic and divine order and controlled by the authority of an unchanging system. This practice tends to greatly decrease that loving confidence of the members and the respect of all true Christians below what formerly existed when, without the prestige of wealth, fine Churches, or great learning, but with simple Scriptural force under the old plan, the preachers went forth like one crying in the wilderness, called sinners to repentance, and by such a course and a holy life, caused the word of God mightily to prevail; and when one Minister was changed for another, the people knew exactly, or very nearly so, that they had to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing. The present system tends to unsettle the public religious mind on matters that ought to be established so as to give no food to skepticism or infidelity. which are building up a gigantic structure from recruits dissenting from various religious organizations all over these lands. The Annual Conferences come round; and, although they do not make laws for the Church, they offer suggestions and recommend to the General Conferences which are held every four years,

besides appointing delegates to places in the greater legislative body, to state what changes, readjustments or modifications are deemed necessary in the laws; and so changes are provided for and constantly expected. While it is admitted that no constitutional change in doctrine or discipline is intended to affect the great fundamental principles of Christianity; yet it is too evident that the changes that have taken place do affect them; and there is scarcely any one principle that is now absolutely settled in practice owing to the wide scope given to superintendents of circuits to control as they think proper all parts of public worship. It is but reasonable to expect the Church that comes nearest to our unchanging God to change the least in its system.

Christ taught "that there should be one fold and one shepherd." In His prayer to the Father, Christ used this sacred and solemn petition in which there is no vain repetition: "That they all may be one; as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee." The unity should resemble the unity of the Godhead; for Christ's prayer indicates not an internal unity of will in independent existences, but an internal and external unity of substance and will in existences whose functions and modes of operation are different. It was written in the Epistles during this period, "Let there be no divisions among you; but speak ye all the same thing and be ye perfectly joined together in the same judgment." Oneness of believers is the connection of all believers in one and the same organization. "There is one body, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." Now are they many members, but one body? "Let there be no divisions in the body." The rhetorical figures describing the Church require an external unity: (1,) a vine; (2,) a light; (3,) an olive tree; (4,) a city; (5,) a temple; (6,) the body of Christ; (7,) a kingdom. Division would destroy any one of these

illustrations and therefore any division is injurious and unscriptural. There is no other alternative. There must be an external unity among the followers of Christ—if they would but fill their high calling. This is the declared verdict of Apostolic history and writings. Many may well ask in this fourth quarter of the nineteenth century, “Where is the true fold and the one body?”

The various denominations each claim to be a visible Church—a true fold and one body, while the Church of England claims to be *the* only visible Apostolic Church and the others all seceders from her. In their Synods, Conferences and Conventions they send friendly greetings to each other, but out on the Mission field or in the more thickly populated centres the ministers of one body speak disrespectfully of their neighbor, and individualism crops up to such an extent that anything but brotherly love is manifested among them. They do not feel towards each other as members of one family. It is evident these things ought not so to be. One has a right to respect the other, and they all have a right to respect the mother who gave them birth. When she makes overtures of union, as was the case in the Chicago Convention in 1886, her proposals are criticized and ignored in the spirit of true secular hostility by many from whom better things should be expected. In the early days of Methodism in the United States, Dr. Coke at one time nearly arranged a union with the Church of England, but so soon as his plans became thoroughly known to the Methodist Conference they were severely handled, and so the division was continued, and has since been perpetuated. The time will come, in God’s providence and in His own good time, when they shall be united, and in the meanwhile let us all live together as brethren.

CHAPTER VI.

The writer once visited Epworth, the birth-place of the Wesleys. There stood the old Parish Church, venerable with age, being over 800 years old. Its aisles were paved with the tombs of the pious dead. There seemed a solemn awe resting upon every thing. There stood the old oaken pulpit, the old stone font where from generation to generation the solemn sacrament of Christian baptism had been administered. There was an old oaken chair which had been in use for 316 years. There was another chair which bore the name of Lady Wesley's Chair in which the Wesley family had been nursed, and there was the old oaken chest in which the Rev. Samuel Wesley kept the register of births and marriages for 39 years. Just outside the door was the tomb of the memorable rector, on which Wesley preached to the people when the Church was closed against him. There were two decayed spots on the tomb stone, caused, no doubt, by the action of the weather; but the story was that these holes were made by the heels of Wesley's boots in his earnest gestures, while preaching on his father's tomb for six successive days. The inscription on the tomb was "Here lieth all that was mortal of Samuel Wesley, A. M. He was rector of Epworth 39 years, and departed this life 25th April, 1735, aged 72 years." Here was an occasion for reflection on the stability of the Church which, not only at Epworth, but throughout the length and breadth of England, had stood as a beacon light to the nation and the world. A church whose prayer book had not undergone a revision for some hundred years before the inscription was put upon that tombstone, nor from that time to the present.

In looking round Epworth, that old town of historic memory to Methodism, there was no Wesleyan Chapel, and upon enquiry, I found that there were over fifty towns in England, some of which contained a population of 50,000 people, where no Wesleyan Methodist Chapel could be found. In the reflection the question arose, "Is Methodism the same to-day that it was in the days of its founder, when their numbers increased so rapidly and their influence seemed to pervade each nook and corner of the land?" Upon visiting London and City Road Chapel where John Wesley gathered the people from all parts of the great metropolis and officiated in the ministerial robes, used the forms of prayer and liturgy of the Church of England for so many years, and when I had noticed a scattered congregation of well dressed and poorly dressed people, men with no collars, some with neckties askew, and some with no necktie at all, while here and there were well dressed men and women apparently belonging to the better classes, the question arose again, "Is Methodism going to stand like the old Establishment or dwindle to a wreck after all its great achievements in the world?" Here the mind was carried back a hundred years to the time when Wesley preached his first sermon at City Road Chapel, on laying the foundation stone, and these words added interest to the reflection: "The Methodists at Oxford were all one body and as it were all one soul; zealous for the religion of the Bible, of the primitive Church and consequently of the Church of England." In this quotation from Wesley's sermon, it is evident that great and good man, (whose experience had been vast, his study extensive, his publications over one hundred, some of which contained from 500 to 700 pages,) believed the Church of England was the primitive Church and her religion was the religion of the Bible.

In that same sermon he warned his people not to separate from the Church. He referred them to some who had left and said "after this they did scarce any good except to their own little body." He referred to them as having left him, in the following language : "They are branches broken off from the tree; if they break from the Church also we are not accountable for it." "We do not, will not form any separate sect but from principle remain what we always have been, true members of the Church of England." The force of these words, spoken after forty years experience in a special work within the pale of the Church, it must be admitted, teach that Wesley intended his people should hold to their moorings, and not drift away from the Church. It is a well-known fact that all who have left the old Established Church and formed new sects, either came to naught or sub-divided into separate sects, holding different views and frequently becoming antagonistic to each other and to the great parent from whom they severed their allegiance. In many instances the antagonism has grown so strong against the great parent Church that they are blinded by prejudice and suspicion to such a degree, that they will not look into the peculiarities of the Church or even consider with calm intelligence the Scriptural doctrines and practice which she unfolds and inculcates, as much now or even more strongly than in former years, as has already been shown in these pages.

Continuing the reflection which was started in City Road Chapel and other places, the question arose, "Are not the objections which Methodists raise in regard to the Church of England rather trifling, when compared with sound reason and the practices of the early Church both in Jewish and Apostolic times?"

One objection is raised against the use of Ministerial Garments.

This objection is frequently made and sometimes turned into ridicule while the practice is still kept up in the old City Road Chapel in London, and wearing the gown is kept up in one Methodist Church in Montreal. The practice of using Clerical robes is founded upon the custom that has prevailed from the earliest periods ; over the whole world and in different ages a difference of costume has marked the difference of office. The judges of our Superior Courts wear a black gown while upon the bench, and the lawyers do the same while pleading at the bar. Our army and navy adhere to a professional dress. The public societies and orders are designated by scarfs, badges or regalia which members wear to indicate their standing and office. All this is considered reasonable and proper ; and is it not equally reasonable and equally proper that the Minister of God should be clothed in a manner appropriate to his office, while he is engaged in its solemn duties ? When objection is made to the Church of England on this ground, the objector, to be consistent, must raise his voice against all military uniform, society-badges and regalia and also object to the legal profession wearing any garments to distinguish them from other men.

But there is higher authority for this custom than the above. The Church of England does not base its practice solely upon what is reasonable but goes to the Scripture for its sanction. In some instances, the Almighty has been pleased to regulate the minute details of earthly worship, and in this case has given directions about the garments which His ministers should wear. The ordinary priests under the Jewish dispensation, when performing service, were to wear a *white linen ephod*. If, therefore, there was anything improper or ridiculous in the Minister of God wearing these garments, would the Lord have given it his sanc-

tion? Clearly not. Again, if God commanded and prescribed these garments in one age of the Church, and if the reasons for their use were not peculiar to that dispensation, is it not natural and reasonable to infer that they are highly proper now? There is ample evidence that for at least fifteen hundred years past the surplice has been the dress of the minister in the performance of public worship; and the history of the Primitive Church in this respect is proved by the most learned commentator that Methodism ever owned, the highly esteemed Rev. Dr. Adam Clark, who says on Exodus 28.2, "The *white surplice* in the service of the Church is almost the only thing that remains of those ancient and *becoming vestments* which God commanded to be made for *glory* and *beauty*. Clothing emblematical of *office* is of more consequence than is generally imagined. Were the great officers of the Crown and the great officers of justice to clothe themselves like common people when they appear in their public capacity, both their persons and their *decisions* would be soon held in little estimation." Dr. Chalmers also, that great light of the Presbyterian Church for half a century past, says, regarding Exodus, 28 1.14, "There is here a distinct sanction given to the association of outward splendor with the office of the ministry—if not such as to make it imperative or indispensable, at least to condemn the intolerance of those who stand opposed to it. In the antipathy to priestly garments and in the controversies which have been raised about them, I can take no part." Such are the testimonies of these great men, recorded in the calm moments of their communing with God. Is not the Church of England right, therefore, in adhering to this old custom of using clerical garments? Does not the objection to the Church on this ground seem exceedingly trifling? It is a significant fact, as a

general rule, that people who object to certain things in the Church, do so from a very meagre knowledge of the reason of the things. When they become acquainted with the ground work, the very elementary studies of the great edifice become more interesting, and it is an indisputable fact that the more persons know of the Church of England, of her worship, doctrines and discipline, the more they love her, and those who know her best love her most. Casual worshippers, who are unacquainted with the worship practised in the Church do not feel at home at first. They rather feel uncomfortable at not being able to join in the Service while those acquainted with it and are sincere in their devotions drink deep of the living waters and enjoy the bread of life, going away refreshed and strengthened like Peter on the mount, and saying "it is good to be here." Let these same casual worshippers continue to go and strive to worship in the right spirit; and they will soon express themselves in a similar manner.



CHAPTER VII.

In the centre of a great city may be seen an immense Park, containing nearly one thousand acres of lawn, shady walks, garden and wood, lake and brook, with grand avenues for lordly carriages, playgrounds for children, whispering places of retirement amid fountains, flowers and every charm of rural grandeur and artistic beauty. This picturesque spot was once a wilderness marsh with rough hills and tangled woodlands ; but the art of engineering skill and landscape gardening has turned it into an earthly paradise. There are numerous ways of seeing the park. One can go on foot and follow the gently curved paths, pass over pretty vine-covered bridges, stop to view the statues and various objects of interest, drink at the fountains, rest on the rustic seats, and see the driving and display of fine horses and gorgeous apparel, and take a boat and cross to the other side of a beautiful lake with its edges covered with variegated flowers, mosses and ferns. He can lunch in the casino, lounge on the terrace and again ramble through shady paths, along winding lanes, past bold rocks, through deep thickets, woods and scattered grass, as the paths are both small and great and run in every conceivable direction, and cross each other in such a delightfully confusing way that there seems no end of interest in following them to see where they really go. Another way to see the park is on horseback and a good gallop can be enjoyed without fear as the bridle roads avoid the greater part of the carriage drives and go under or over the foot paths. But by taking a carriage and driving through the charming pleasure grounds many more enchanting scenes are presented to view. We see the great play-

grounds where thousands of boys and young children roam on the wild field and play ball and other games, they drink at the fountains or rest under the shady trees. We view the great common where flocks of sheep and herds of cows are seen, with here and there a lake of silvery water glittering through the trees, until, imperceptibly turning into the heart of the park again, other statues of earth's honored men are seen ; and the interest is sustained as mile after mile is passed.

To see the great park with all its mysteries, beauties and endless grandeur, the fifteen miles of carriage roads will only serve a part. The eight miles of bridle roads reach other charming scenes while the twenty-five miles of footpaths reach other and different spots of interest, grandeur and beauty. There are other parks in the city but none like this one. There are many other cities possessing parks of great beauty and magnificence, but none exactly like this. Each city may think its parks the best. Thousands and tens of thousands of her citizens think they are the best, and only come to a different conclusion when they have travelled abroad to see those that are greater and more elaborate.

The reference to a park is always pleasing to many minds, and here affords an illustration, to show that each Church considers itself the best, and thousands and tens of thousands of her members think there is none so good and Scripturally founded. It is well to travel abroad from our own little landscape or greater city limits to look at the sights beyond. It is well to go to the Bible and search for truth. In looking at the Church of England, there is a deep meaning in many of her practices which can only be seen from certain points of view. There are her forms of worship in which some see no excellency, but rather condemn

as tedious and wearisome. Others contend that liturgies necessarily produce lifelessness and formality in worship. To take a narrow path that leads direct to the fountain-head of all truth, there are seen clearly forms of public worship. Moses and the children of Israel thanked God for their deliverance from Egypt in the words of a *previously written form*; and this, too, was done *responsively*, as the Psalter in the Church service.

The High Priest is seen blessing the people in a *set form of words expressly dictated by the Deity*. Moses *prayed by a form* at the setting forward of the ark, and at its setting down again. In the Book of Deuteronomy there are various forms which were to be used by the people on various public occasions. Many of David's Psalms were written expressly for the service of the sanctuary. At the dedication of the Temple, Solomon, instead of trusting to the impulse of the moment, *used a form* which was evidently precomposed for the occasion. In traversing the entire Old Testament by whatever road is chosen there are to be seen frequent commands and constant examples in favor of *forms of worship*. If we tarry in the temple or synagogue, there the liturgical or set form is used. In all God's messages by the mouth of his prophets there is no disapprobation of a form of worship. If it had been wrong, surely it would have been condemned and a better way pointed out. In continuing the search and journeying onward down through the New Testament times, we see no disapproval of set forms of worship. The Saviour entered the temple and drove out the money-changers but did not denounce the forms of worship; but Sabbath after Sabbath, he and his disciples attended and joined in the Jewish ritual. He never required his followers to abandon it: years after his ascension, as St. Luke tells us, they "were

continually in the temple praising and blessing God." Could anything that Christ might have said given a stronger sanction to *forms* of prayer than his constant attendance upon them? But then, to go farther on, there is to be seen something explicit on this subject. When the disciples came to Jesus and asked to be taught how to pray, he gave them a set *form*, saying: "After this manner pray ye." Journeying onward down through the apostolic history we see, as a learned divine says "that the whole primitive Church constantly used it in all her holy offices out of consciousness, and in regard to Christ's command." The objector, therefore, to *forms* of prayer and worship should view the facts as seen in the Bible; first, that forms were prescribed by God to his people on several occasions under the old dispensation; second, there were forms sanctioned by the practice of our Saviour and his disciples; and, third, that there was a form *given* and *commanded* by our Lord himself. The Church of England claims that she should not be blamed for worshipping as Christ worshipped; for in doing so she is following in his steps. Methodists should consider that their founder followed the same practice, and ordered his preachers to follow it; and in no instance did he depreciate the forms of the Church of England or condemn them. There are many Methodists who think Wesley recommended extempore prayer. In his sermon on "the more excellent way" he says, referring to *private devotions*, "The generality of Christians as soon as they rise, use some kind of prayer, and probably use the same form they learned when they were eight or ten years of age. Now I do not condemn those who proceed thus (though some do) as mocking God; though they have used the same form without any variation for twenty or thirty years together; but surely there is a more excellent

way of ordering our private devotions." When Wesley gives directions about extempore prayer being used in public worship, he says, "do not usually pray *extempore* above eight or ten minutes." A member of another Church says "we condemn the Establishment for its prescribed round of lessons and prayers and for its monotonous uniformity, its iteration and reiteration of the Lord's Prayer, the doxology, etc. ; but in fact *our* conduct of public worship is *as wearisome, as insipid, undiversified and much more autocratic than theirs, and is driving our young people increasingly into the Church of England or alienating them from the sanctuary altogether.* I appeal to parents having grown up sons and daughters if this is not so." Another nonconformist says "I frequently take my children to a Church where the Prayer Book of the Church of England is used to prevent their falling into habits of irreverent listlessness in a place of worship; Robert Hall, the distinguished and pious Baptist Minister, speaking of extempore prayer, says "God forbid that we should ever imagine this is the only mode of prayer acceptable to God. We cannot doubt that multitudes of devout persons have used forms of devotion with eminent advantage." The Rev. Albert Barnes, an eminent Presbyterian Minister, formerly in Philadelphia, says "We have never doubted that many of the purest flames of devotion that rise from the earth ascend from the altars of the Church of England."

The objection to the use of forms of prayer in public worship is very trifling as seen from the various points of view we have already taken. We have seen them in the Old and New Testament. We have seen them in the early Christian Churches for 1,400 years before the Reformation, and ever since in the Church of England, which has given to the world some

of the greatest spiritual workers and revivalists that have been known. Saints, Martyrs and the early Christians, God, the Bible and the Church, all are against the objections to forms of prayer ; and now we come to look further to see if we can find a liturgy anywhere in exploring this great pleasure ground of Christian truth.

CHAPTER VIII.

Every congregation worships after some form. It cannot do otherwise. The people unite with and follow after the minister, and receive the words as he dictates them ; the prayer he makes *is for the time* the form by which they worship. They cannot tell whether he invents it at the moment or repeats it from manuscript. By attending regularly upon the services of any minister, you will find that his prayers fall gradually into a form and become substantially the same from Sunday to Sunday, so that after listening to him for some time, you can tell when he is about the middle, and when he is near the end of his prayer. If then, every congregation necessarily worships after a form, the question comes up as to *which is best*, a premeditated and carefully prepared form, which has been composed by the most pious and educated men and used for ages by our fathers and forefathers in their sacred devotions, or an extempore form coming from the mind, and, may be, the heart, of one person, who may not be so wise, judicious and pious as the

united wisdom and piety of those who composed the prayers and liturgy of the holy Church. If every minister were highly gifted and fluent, if every minister's heart were glowing with devotion each time he appeared before God in prayer, and if every minister were educated, wise and prudent in the use of language, and used prayers that were free from lectures or compliments to the people, and repeated in a solemn manner and humble voice, there would be some reason for dispensing with set forms. The Methodists, of all men, should not object to forms of worship, for they pray in a stereotyped form more than any others. There are many of them using the same words and form in their prayers for years with scarcely any variation of voice or words ; and, in many instances, they are wearisome, lifeless, and seem never to be answered. The great founder of Methodism said : "I believe there is no liturgy in the world, either in ancient or modern language, which breathes more of solid, scriptural rational piety than the Common Prayer of the Church of England, and Dr. Adam Clark, the most learned of Wesley's followers, said : "The Liturgy is almost universally esteemed by the devout and pious of every denomination, and is *the greatest effort of the Reformation* next to the translation of the Scriptures into the English language. As a form of devotion, *it has no equal* in any part of the Universal Church of God. *Next to the Bible, it is a book of my understanding, and of my heart.*" Another testimony comes from Dr. Cumming, of London, a most distinguished Presbyterian minister, who said, in pleading for forms in his own Church : "There is a mediocrity among clergy, as among laity. Nothing can be more painful than to hear harangues instead of prayers, and preaching instead of simple petitions." The *Edinburgh Review*, some time ago, referring to the rapid strides of

the Church of England in Scotland, and the number of Presbyterians who were joining it, says: "The source of the extensive alienation which has taken place is to be found in the superior attractions of a more ritual worship; for certainly there is no more just exception against the worship of Scottish Presbyterians, than its effect in placing the most devotional part of divine service entirely at the mercy of the individual minister who conducts it."

In taking every available means of viewing this subject, there are to be seen the most distinguished, scholarly divines of various denominations agreeing with the great Church herself that the forms of worship are reasonable, Scriptural and eminently conducive to the highest spiritual life. To journey onward for more light, we see one shining brilliantly through the hymns and psalms, those great devotional *forms* of praise and prayer. When the first line is given out, there are several persons in the congregation who know beforehand every word they are to sing, and most of them have books open before them. Now, every one who joins in singing these verses which express the desires of his heart to the Lord, prays, if he uses verses, with which he was acquainted before; *he prays by a form*; he does the very thing which he objects to, the only difference is his prayer is in poetry. Unless it can be proven that the same petition is proper in poetry and improper in prose, the practice in one case will justify it in the other. There is no question raised here but that there are excellent Christians who worship God in both ways by forms and extempore; but the question is, should the Church of England be condemned for the Liturgy and forms of prayer when they have been so eminently successful, when they are sanctioned by so many authorities, the Saviour Himself and the Church all

through the centuries? That they do not tend to lifelessness or coldness may be seen clearly. Wesley became most ardently devotional from using them. The Moravians, to whom Wesley owed much of his great zeal, and who were, perhaps, the most devoted of all Christians, with their missionaries scattered abroad from the snows of Greenland to the burning sands of the Tropics, worshipped after a form. The great reformers, Luther and Calvin, both composed forms of prayer for the churches which they founded. In Germany, Sweden, Denmark, at Geneva, and among the Protestants in France, liturgies are now to be seen. Baxter, the great and pious, prepared a liturgy for popular use. Dr. Paley says: "The enumeration of human wants and sufferings in the Litany is almost complete. A Christian petitioner can have few things to ask of God, or to deprecate, which he will not find there expressed, and for the most part with inimitable tenderness and simplicity." When the Methodists were established in the United States, Wesley, their father, prepared a liturgy for them. John Knox, the Scottish Reformer, prepared a liturgy which was used for several years in the Church of Scotland, and which many of them wish to be used yet. The Wesleyan Methodists in England use the Church of England service. The French Huguenots in some places in the United States, though having a Presbyterian minister, use a liturgy. A Presbyterian Church, built lately in New York, has introduced a liturgy. The General Assembly in Scotland, a few years ago, appointed a committee to prepare a Book of Devotion. The Dutch Reformed Church, a highly respectable body of Christians in the United States, have a liturgy. The fact is, this whole subject is occupying the minds of many of the most thoughtful and influential Christians of the present day, and one of the ablest of their number says:

“Though no prudent man would expose himself or his cause to the torrent of abuse which the sudden proposal of the subject would bring upon him, yet numbers believe that the *judicious use of a form of prayer is not only consistent with the purest teaching of Christian doctrine, but with the universal usage of the Reformed Churches in their purest days.*” The excellency of the Liturgy of the Church of England has already been established, but the following striking quotation from a dissenting quarter will make an appropriate close to this chapter. “It is a striking testimony to the intrinsic excellence of the Liturgy of the Church of England and to the fidelity and purity with which it expresses the genuine spirit of Christianity, that though descended from such remote antiquity, it has lost none of its original freshness. It is as serviceable for the present generation, as thoroughly adapted to the utterances of our profoundest, as also of our most delicate and varied feelings, as if it had been composed in our own day. *Nay, it is more so.* What English prose will venture to challenge a comparison with the majesty and melody of the Collects? Shakespere and Milton may have equalled them by the happiest effort of their genius; we know of no prose writing that could bear such a trial. The cause of this superiority is plain. The Liturgy is the choicest selection of what has proved to be the best during a long lapse of time. Its Litany and its Collects are the fruit of the most sublime piety, and the noblest gifts of language, tested by long substantial trial. *No single generation could have created or could replace the Liturgy.* It is the accumulation of the treasures with which the most diversified experience, the most fervid devotion, and the most exalted genius, have enriched the worship of prayer and praise during 1500 years. Who, then, can over-estimate its influence in perpetuating the sacred

fire of Christian love and faith among a whole people, or exaggerate its power in conserving the pure and apostolic type of Christian worship?"

CHAPTER IX.

The Tower of London and the Rock of Gibraltar are considered the greatest fortresses in the world. The one stands in the mightiness of its strength, and has had a place in history of such great importance that for eight centuries since it first frowned upon the waters of the Thames it has never sustained an attack from a foreign enemy ; but it has frequently felt the shock of violent internal convulsions from the strife and fierce passions which have characterized the various agitations of England's own sons. The internal conflicts have been varied, but the ancient pile still stands proudly in its place, amidst the surrounding mass of modern structure. The dark shadows of the past that enshroud the gloomy fabric only serve to throw into stronger relief the justice and liberty, the intelligence and refinement, which illuminate our day. No one who has an interest in the annals of his country can approach with indifference this royal castle of his forefathers. It is still the chief fortress of the nation, and the great depository of the national arms and accoutrements, so that every man can be supplied with a weapon of defense. The White Tower erected in 1080, is 116 by 96 feet and 92 feet high, while the external walls are 15 feet thick. What

have been the changes? Such as have made it mightier, more magnificent and formidable. The Rock of Gibraltar stands an impregnable fortress, unchanged during the centuries, the ages and cycles. Do not these fortresses draw us near the idea of an unchanging and an unchangeable God who is the same yesterday, to-day and forever? Is not God's Church likened to a rock? Christ is the Rock, the chief corner stone; and the "Church is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered, according to Christ's ordinance." There should be prescribed methods of doing this, otherwise there will be confusion. The sacraments may be duly administered, but unless there is a form to go by, there is danger of their not being duly administered. The most reasonable, the most intelligent method, and that by which the greatest safeguards are thrown about the Church is to avoid changes and to perpetuate the idea of the rock and fortress.

But it is argued by the opponents of the Church of England that the form engenders indifference to revivals, to the cause of missions and a deficiency in vital piety. Are these arguments sound? Let us see. The Prayer Book standard of devotion is incompatible with any other life than the imitation of Christ, and can there be any higher standard or any loftier practical life? Every Prayer, Collect, Psalm or Lesson, and every part of the Liturgy leads to a devotional frame of mind, deals with substantial Scriptural truths, and is a terror to evil doers. The Prayers, the Offices, the Articles, and the Hymns teach the necessity of the renewing of the heart by the Spirit of God, so that if the necessity of a change of heart is not taught in the Prayer Book, it is not taught in the Bible. A "change of heart" unquestionably means "repentance towards

God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." That is the way Paul taught it and no one can read the qualifications the Church of England prescribes to candidates for Baptism and to those who would partake of the Holy Communion without admitting that they are such as the Apostles required, expressed in Scriptural language. The Church ought not to be blamed for not using a peculiar phrase, which is of recent origin, and not found in the Bible, provided she holds, teaches and requires the thing itself. It is also argued against the Church that she is unfriendly to Revivals. As is generally understood, a "revival" means an *increased interest in religion, manifested by the more holy walk of its professors, and by a greater number of conversions to God than usual*. If this be the meaning, then the charge is unfounded, for this is the very work the Church of England is laboring to accomplish throughout all its vast agencies. There is however some difference in the *means* adopted for bringing about these results, compared with measures considered proper by others. The Church believes in proper methods for exciting and deepening religious feeling and interest; and there are many Christians of all denominations who think as the Church of England does.

The Methodists, who deserve so much praise for their zeal and labor and who, more than any others, have engaged in these religious excitements, are beginning to have misgivings as to the policy and propriety of them. The following from the *New York Christian Advocate and Journal*, the ablest paper of the denomination, clearly shows this. "It cannot be denied that the system of recruiting our Church by revivals has been seriously abused, and that the faith of our preachers and people in the benefits of such religious excitements has been very much shaken.

The plan of forcing a periodical excitement by the aid of professional agitators or revivalists, has been fraught with consequences most disastrous to the Church. Machine-made converts were found to have a very ephemeral life, and the successful labors of the reviver to fill the classes of probationers, were generally followed by the more laborious and very ungrateful efforts of the regular preachers to rid them of careless and irreligious members. Camp-meetings, too, from a variety of causes, have become very unproductive, and many of our most thoughtful preachers and members have found it necessary to discourage attendance upon them." The above is strong language, uttered with pathos, and would be considered uncharitable, if used by an opponent of Methodism. It goes to show that the Church of England, in disapproving of certain measures, introduced in modern times, does not stand alone, and is not opposed to revivals of religion, but on the contrary uses every Scriptural and legitimate means for saving souls. Are the denominations who have for the longest period resorted to such means of creating revivals proving successful? The great Methodist organs in England, the *Times* and *Recorder*, tell us that the Wesleyans were about 700 members weaker in 1885 than in 1884, and that out of new members who joined, 26,780 resigned. Their Theological Colleges are half empty. In one district, 35 villages, where Methodism once flourished the body has ceased to exist; in other districts, 19 village services have been given up, in another 24 have been stopped, so that the vast rural population is now almost wholly left to the spiritual care of the Church of England. That is what the *Times* says. The *Recorder* says frankly "we ourselves, after very close consideration, are prepared to admit the Church of England, in the number of its more or less attached adherents, exceeds

the sum total of all other denominations, the Roman Catholics included. It is evident, also, in respect of wealth, influence and general resources, it exceeds much more largely the other denominations combined ; and further, that, were it not for its own intestine divisions, it would have the advantage against all who are separated from it of united mass and organization against divided interests, diverging tendencies and mutually independent organizations. We are neither able nor disposed to deny, furthermore, that during the last 20 years its growth and advance have been very wonderful—greater, on an average, in respect of practical aggressiveness and voluntary organic development, than the growth and advance of nonconformity as a whole.” There is no doubt this result has been achieved by the *revival* work in the Church of England which has been carried on so successfully for several years past, and in keeping to a great extent with the old method used by John Wesley in his day, and which was carried on within the pale of the Church, which is so broad, so high and so low that none need seek other spheres for usefulness in the Master’s vineyard. The following from the Bishop of Leitchfield’s monthly address indicates the manner in which the revivals are carried on in the old established fortress, the Church of England :

“ Our little band of lay evangelists, headed by their devoted chief, are winning many souls for Christ, as they proclaim, in the highways as well as in our mission rooms, the freeness and the fulness of the Gospel of Christ. And, as the fruit of their labors, we are gathering together in many parts a few of our artizans and working men whose hearts have been kindled by the love of Christ ; who, in their own neighborhoods, and without forsaking their worldly calling, will give us local help as district evangelists. We are now

making special arrangements for the careful training of these men in Scriptural knowledge and in the doctrines of the Church. They will be a great strength to us, working from their own homes among their own kinsfolk, acquaintance and neighbors."

CHAPTER X.

In singing that noble hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains, from India's Coral Strand," the missionary spirit is at once awakened ; and who composed it but a Bishop of the Church of England, who died in a distant mission field ? The Church has to-day many faithful missionaries, men and women on the coast of Africa, in the deadliest climate on the globe. Dr. Baird, of the Presbyterian Church, forty years ago, in his work entitled "Religion in America," said "the contributions of the Episcopal Church in the United States for Foreign Missions, in proportion to the number of her communicants, were, as compared to other Churches, setting aside decimals, as follows : Compared with the Presbyterian Church, as one dollar and twenty cents to one dollar ; as compared with the Methodists, as ten dollars to one ; compared with all others together, as one dollar to two." It must not be forgotten, too, that the oldest Protestant Missionary Society in the world has its origin among Church of England people, and that this Church's particular mission is to carry the Gospel to every creature throughout the world. Where did John Wesley get his missionary

spirit when he went out to Georgia but in the Church of England. In all Christendom there is no religious body surpassing the Church of England in missionary zeal. Within fifty years the seven Colonial Bishops of the Anglican Church have increased to seventy-seven, many of them with over one hundred clergymen. In every clime the Church is planted—in New Zealand alone there are five Bishops with large corps of native clergy under them. There are the Home Missions, Foreign Missions, Missions to the Jews and to the heathen, and so the work goes on. There are 400 converted Jews clergymen in the Church of England to-day, three of whom have been raised to the rank of Bishop. It is urged again that the Church is deficient in *vital piety*. Church people are styled fashionable, aristocratic and fond of worldly conformity. As to deficiency in vital piety, let the same Dr. Baird answer, whose testimony is valuable, as he was of another denomination; he says: "It (the E. Church) possesses a degree of life and energy throughout all its extent, and an amount of vital piety in its ministers and members, such as it never had in its colonial days. It is blessed with precious revivals and flourishes like a tree planted by the rivers of waters. The friend of a learned and able ministry, to form which she has founded colleges and theological institutions. She sees among her clergy, not a few men of the highest distinction for talents, learning, eloquence, as well as piety and zeal." The charge that great liberty is given to her members, and that they are worldly and excessively fond of pleasure, is so sweepingly made, that weak-minded persons, or those blinded by ignorance, have been greatly influenced against the Church in consequence; while others, wishing to belong to some church which would give them a license to worldly conformity, have expressed a

desire to join it in order to have the latitude they desired for conforming with the world. But they soon discover their mistake upon being informed that an expressed *condition of churchmanship* that each one, in the presence of witnesses, has formally and solemnly to agree to, is that he "renounce the devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world with all the covetous desires of the same, and the sinful desires of the flesh." The same renunciation is made at Confirmation. The pastorals frequently warn the people against those "worldly pleasures which may tend to withdraw the affection from spiritual things," and especially, designated gaming amusements involving cruelty to the brute creation and theatrical entertainments. Suppose then that there are worldly persons in the Church, is it not clear that they are violating the express conditions of their membership? that they act in direct opposition to the authority and teachings of the Church? But their inconsistencies can no more be urged as an argument against the Church of England, than the faults of professors generally can be laid at the door of Christianity itself. There is nothing, however, to prevent piety from flourishing in the Church. Her worship favors its growth and the growth is manifest; not so much by salient starts as a steadily fixed purpose to live according to the teachings and principles laid down by Christ and his Apostles. A distinguished Wesleyan Minister says in a letter published in a Boston paper, "There is more *true religion* in the Church of England than anywhere else in the country. This Church is the only Protestant body which is making progress in Evangelical labors and prosperous advances." This was said of the Church of England where experience, intelligence and advanced education are so prominent, and where also vital piety abounds. The objector

should remember that it was the Church of England which translated the Bible he reads, that the great commentator Scott was one of her sons, that Dr. Adam Clark, whose commentary is so much prized by Methodists, and deservedly so, was brought up in the bosom of the Church and at the age of seventy still considered himself a thorough member of it. Take a list of devotional books, and where can there be found more soul-stirring publications than those from the pens of the Bishops and Clergymen of the Church of England? The soul-stirring influences of these books of devotion are of a safe character, leading to the solid foundation of Christ's teachings, examples, principles and practice and up to the great fatherhead of God. Her women also, such as Hannah More, Charlotte Elizabeth and others, prove that the Church produces fruits of the most vital character and lasting as eternity. The following from the Bishop of Ripon is a sample of the Church's system of teaching the way to promote vital piety :—

“We are like the flowers, and trees, and grass of the valley ; as the Apostle said : ‘All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field.’ We are like the flowers and the trees, too, that cannot grow without the fresh, pure water of God : without it the world grew parched ; sin dried up men's best powers, and they could not grow beautiful in good works and pure lives, but grew useless or withered altogether away, and they could only cry out for want of some power to make their hearts fresh and tender again ; and at last from the heights of God the power and the help came, bright and sparkling as the river of life ; Jesus Christ came, to give to those that were athirst fountains of living water. But, then, like a stream on the side of the precipice, He seemed to melt away ; He died, and the people who thought He was

coming to help them were sad, for they thought that they had lost Him ; but just as the spray and mist had gathered into stream again, so Christ was not really lost, but rose again to life, and became the strength of His people, saying : ‘ I am He that was dead and am alive again, and behold I am alive for evermore.’ And whenever we are unhappy and feel that we cannot live fruitful and bright lives, but are only cross, and selfish, and surly, and unkind, remember that there is a bright stream of love—that can make your heart soft and tender. If you ask Him He will be glad to make you glad, and through you to make all others glad.

“ When you hear of others who want help, don’t put away the thought of them : listen to their cry. The little stream at the precipice hears the cry of the fainting flowers, and rushes to help them ; it is nothing to it that it has to be broken to pieces and shivered, as it trembles down the precipice ; it is only eager to help. Christ heard the cry of the sore and thirsty world, and leaped to help them ; it was nothing to Him that He had to face the cross and have all His life broken and His work scattered in death. He was only eager to help others, and make them happy. So we must listen and give help when we can. The voice of sorrow, the voice of pity, the voice of conscience, the voice of love, the voice of truth, may always be heard by those who listen for them. Never mind those who say : “ You will lose by listening to such sounds.” Never mind if it sometimes seems to you that it is no use trying, and that your strength is scattered to no purpose, like the broken and scattered stream on the face of the mountain. Go on ; spend yourself for others ; you will grow stronger, others will be made happier, the world will look brighter, and, best of all, you will be only doing just what Jesus

Christ, your Master and mine, wished you to do. You will be giving your life for others; you will not be lost, even though you die. Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, has the keys of death and the grave, and will bring you to the soft, quiet land where the true meaning of life will be seen, and all loving deeds live in God's remembrance, where the flowers never fade and the trees never wither, and where the river of the water of life flows and makes glad the city of God."

CHAPTER XI.

The Methodists and many others appear to have a holy horror of the Church of England from the idea they have some way got hold of that it is little different from the Roman Catholic Church. This impression is fostered by many who, to say the least, ought to know better. It is a significant fact that the Apostles' Creed is so seldom heard or the Confession of Faith so seldom recited by the various denominations, though catechisms contain them, that when occasionally they are heard, some people stagger at the words "Holy Catholic Church" in the Creed, and are impressed with the idea that they mean Romanism. Yet the word Catholic Church means the universal Church, all of Christ's people, wherever they may be dispersed throughout the world. The term Catholic was first applied to the Christian Church to distinguish it from the Jewish; the latter being confined to a single

nation, the former being open to all who should seek admission into it. The whole weight of the objection to the Church of England on this ground lies in a misapprehension of the meaning of the term. But, it is said, again, that crosses are used on her churches, which shows sympathy with the Roman Church. This practice is by no means universal, but suppose it were, where would the harm be? It is a touching emblem of the faith which the Church professes, and certainly affords a far more appropriate finish to the steeple of a church than the arrow, the fish, or some other representation that is now used. As people become less prejudiced, they are beginning to acknowledge the propriety of this emblem which may now be seen on churches belonging to Baptists, Presbyterians, and even Methodists. (One Methodist church in Cobourg has six.) Are they tending towards Romanism because of this? Most certainly not; then why should anyone say the Church of England is?

But it is said that the priestly garments are relics of Popery. Let those who say so look at the portraits of Wesley, or Dr. Adam Clark, as they appeared in the pulpit, and say if there was any Popery about them because they wore a becoming ministerial robe? There are many ministers in various denominations who officiate in gowns.

But the Prayers are Romish, for they are taken from the Missal (the Romish Prayer Book), it is asserted. Such is not the fact. The originals of the Service of the Church of England can be traced back for fourteen hundred years, and were used centuries before Popery had an existence.

But the Roman Catholics have robes and forms of prayer, it is argued. Well, does this make them wrong? Should the Church of England throw them aside for no better reason than that the Church of

Rome adopts them ? Then the doctrine of the Trinity must be discarded, also the rite of baptism which she retains. The question for each one to determine for himself is, whether an observance is Scriptural or not, and if it is sanctioned by the usage of the *Ancient Church* ? *If so, it is right and proper.*

It is argued, again, that many of the Church of England clergymen have gone over to the Church of Rome. Some have done so, and in a large majority of cases, they are individuals who have been educated in and trained by some of the dissenting denominations, and whose faith had become shaken in the practices and discipline of the special sect to which they belonged ; then went into the Church of England, and being in most cases men of unstable mind, caused in some instances by lax training, and liable to go to extremes, passed on to the other extreme from which they had started. But it cannot be reasonably said that the Church is responsible for the vagaries of such men. The denomination in which they were trained is more responsible. There are, of course, some who have been trained up in the Church, itself, who have gone over to the Church of Rome ; but the whole Church can not be said to have the same tendency as a few individuals. This is a kind of logic which, like a two-edged sword, cuts both ways. Look over the list of clergymen of the Church of England in Canada and in the United States ; and in the latter country there are over 300 who have been Baptists, Presbyterians, and Methodists ; and there are scores in Canada who have done the same. Does this prove that the tendency of these religious bodies is towards the Church of England ? In the case of the Methodists it would seem so, because it is their natural home, their paternal abode ; but, doubtless, the other bodies would deny the assertion as strongly as the charge could possibly be made.

Christianity must not be held responsible for the treason of Judas, the falsehood of Ananias and Sapphira, or other crimes which its professed followers may have committed.

But is there anything in the teaching of the Church of England which would tend to Romanism? The Prayer Book is the standard of doctrine and worship, and there is to be found the work of the English Reformers who protested against the tenets of Rome. It was compiled by men, some of whom were burnt to the stake in the reign of Queen Mary for their unflinching opposition to the Roman Church. Cranmer and Ridley were among the principal persons who compiled the Liturgy; and their fate is well known. Would these Reformers have incorporated in the Prayer Book the errors which they opposed, even unto death, and which, for refusing to admit, they perished in the flames? No. It was the Church of England that fought the great battle of the Reformation, in which so many hundreds of her noblest sons sealed their testimony with their blood. The Prayer Book, then, being compiled by martyrs and leaders in the Reformation, it was morally impossible that it could be other than thoroughly Protestant. In the *thirty-nine* articles *fifteen* of them bear distinctly against the errors of Rome. There is no other denomination of Christians that has borne such decided, unequivocal testimony against every error of Romanism as the Church of England. In fact, the Church of England has furnished the ablest champions of Protestantism, and dealt the heaviest blows upon the Church of Rome, that can be found in the world. These are men like Barrow, Chillingworth, Hooker, Taylor, Jewell, and others of her scholars, who have thrown the weight of their experience, erudition and piety against the errors of Rome. From the fact of their education, expe-

rience, and training, many of the foremost in the battle have not stooped to low abuse as an argument, or ribaldry as one of the favorite weapons, but strong persuasive reason, clothed in respectful language, full of truth, justice and mercy. The following extract from a letter written by John Wesley, in 1749, to a Roman Catholic, breathes a true Christian spirit, which might well be imitated by all :—

“Now, can nothing be done, even allowing us on both sides to retain our own opinion, for the softening our hearts towards each other, the giving a check to the flood of unkindness, and restoring at least some small degree of love among the neighbors and countrymen? Are you not fully convinced that malice, hatred, revenge, bitterness, whether in us or in you, or in our hearts or in yours, are an abomination to the Lord? Be our opinions right, or be they wrong, these tempers are undeniably wrong. They are the broad road that leads to destruction, to the nethermost hell.

“I do not suppose all the bitterness is on your side. I think there is too much on our side also; so much that I fear many Protestants (so-called) will be angry at me too, for writing to you in this manner; and will say, ‘It is showing you too much favor; you deserve no such treatment at our hands.’

“But I think you do. I think you deserve the tenderest regard I can show, were it only because the same God hath raised you and me from the dust of the earth, and has made us more capable of loving and enjoying him to eternity; were it only because the Son of God has bought you and me with his own blood. How much more, if you are a person fearing God (as without question many of you are), and studying to have a conscience void of offense towards God and towards man?

“ I shall therefore endeavor, as mildly and inoffensively as I can, to remove in some measure the ground of your unkindness, by plainly declaring what our belief and what our practice is.”

Mr. Wesley then proceeds to describe the Protestant faith in the form of an expository statement of the Nicene Creed. Then he enlarges upon the fact that a true Protestant loves God with all his heart, and his neighbor as himself ; and formally winds up by describing the practical side of a true Protestant's life in terms of the Sermon on the Mount.

“ This,” he concludes, “ and this alone is the old religion. This is true primitive Christianity. O, when shall it spread over all the earth ! When shall it be found both in us and you ! Without waiting for others, let each of us, by the grace of God, amend one.

“ Are we not thus far agreed ? Let us thank God for this and receive it as a fresh token of his love. But if God still loveth us, we ought also to love one another. We ought, without this endless jangling about opinions, to provoke one another to love and to good works. Let the points wherein we differ stand aside ; here are enough wherein we agree, enough to be the ground of every Christian temper and every Christian action.

“ O brethren, let us not fall out by the way ! I hope to see you in heaven. And if I practise the religion above described, you dare not say I shall go to hell. You cannot think so. None can persuade you to it. Your own conscience tells you the contrary. Then if we cannot as yet think alike in all things, at least we may love alike. Herein we cannot possibly do amiss. For of one point none can doubt a moment—‘ God is love ; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.’ ”

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHURCH FESTIVALS.

God appointed several festivals among the Jews so as to perpetuate the memory of great events. The Sabbath commemorated the creation of the world; the Passover, the departure out of Egypt; the Pentecost, the laws given at Sinai. These festivals kept them in mind of God and under the influence of religion. They secured to them certain times of rest and rejoicings, rendered them more familiar with the law, for in their religious assemblies the law of God was read and explained. In the Christian Church, no festival appears to have been expressly instituted by Christ or his Apostles. Yet as we commemorate the passion of Christ as often as we celebrate his Supper, he seems by this to have instituted a perpetual feast. Christians have always celebrated the memory of his resurrection. The Angels from heaven celebrated it with a joyful hymn. The festivals of the Church of England, or set days for certain commemorative services, though not enacted by any express command from the Saviour or his Apostles, they are not forbidden. There are two ways, and only two ways, by which the will of God can be collected from his word; either by some explicit injunction upon all, or by incidental circumstances and, as there is nothing to the contrary, the Church festivals, which are partly as follows, may be considered not as human creations or enactments but Scriptural and of the greatest benefit to all. The first is

THE SABBATH.

The Church of England holds to the sabbatical institution and observes the Lord's day as wholly devoted to religion, exclusive of worldly business and

pleasure, and those who do not so observe the sabbath are unworthy the name they bear and the Church to which they belong. In her Book of Common Prayer, the Calendar fixes the morning and evening lessons from the Bible for every sabbath, so that from one end of the year to the other the people know or can find out, the exact lessons that are to be read in Church, and if through sickness or other causes, they are prevented from attending the house of God, they can engage in the same service at home. The Psalms also are arranged in a like manner, so that as the years roll by the entire devotional parts of the Bible and Psalms are kept in use and prominently fastened upon the minds of the people, as well as the threatenings and denunciations of God's law. Another festival which the church perpetuates is

THE ADVENT,

which appropriately commemorates the coming of our Saviour into the world. The Calendar provides that the four Sundays preceding Christmas are to be observed as a season of devotion with reference to the coming of Christ in the flesh and his second coming to judge the world. What can be more in keeping with the spirit of Christianity than to observe such a season? The lessons, hymns, collects and sermons all tend to keep before the minds of the people the great event of Christ's coming in the flesh, and of the fact that he will come again to judge the world. This season is one that all Christians may enjoy and heartily commemorate. The next is

CHRISTMAS DAY,

which has been observed by all Christians as one of special joy and gladness. The birth of Christ was the greatest blessing ever bestowed on mankind, and was heralded by the Angelic songsters on the plains of

Bethlehem. Every man who has any feeling of his own lost state without a Redeemer must rejoice and be glad in it. This is a festival, however, that has no direct authority in Scripture, but is one that is appropriate. It serves the purpose of keeping in mind the nativity of our Lord, who was appointed heir of all things, by whom also the worlds were made. This festival has such a hold upon the nations of the world to-day, that infidelity and all the powers of darkness combined cannot extinguish "the brightness of his glory." "Christ is the true light that lighteneth every man that cometh into the world." Another of the precious seasons set apart by the Church of England is

THE EPIPHANY,

or the commemoration of Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles. There are six Sundays in this season, and the lessons are all appropriate for leading the mind specially to the Saviour as he appeared to the magicians or philosophers of the East who came to adore him with presents. As the meaning of the word is "to appear," it enables the Church to keep in mind the appearance of the Star to the wise men and the appearance of Christ into the world. The various Sundays in Epiphany are devoted to special appearances, such as : his first, when a babe in Bethlehem ; his appearance to the doctors in the temple, when he astonished them with his understanding, being only twelve years old ; his appearance at the marriage in Cana of Galilee ; besides his appearance to the multitude, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, stilling the storm at sea when he appeared on the waters. This season or festival is full of pure Gospel teaching, which greatly helps to anchor the Christian down to devotional steadfastness and faith, so that there is no room left for doubts concerning the Saviour's appearance in the world and

the great mission he came to fulfil by drawing all men unto him, as the centre of perfection, the fountain of happiness, the Star of hope, ever shining, ever blessing, and perpetually the same.

ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENT.

Under the old dispensation, the feast of tents or tabernacles, during which all Israel were obliged to attend the temple and to dwell eight days under tents of branches, was to commemorate the forty years, when their fathers dwelt in tents while travelling in the wilderness, and so the season of Lent is to remind all Christians of the forty days fasting of Christ in the wilderness. This season is specially designed to perpetuate the memory of sacrifices, self denial, abstinence and prayer, which every Christian finds necessary if he wants to walk in the footsteps of his Master. Protestants, as followers after truth and righteousness, cannot do better than observe such a season as this in the way it is celebrated by the Church of England. It serves as an anchor to hold every Christian sure and steadfast to the truth as it is in Jesus and to his example. It affords the opportunity of a special means of grace. Every day's abstinence from something that is desired and indulged in at other times helps to keep constantly in mind the necessity of the Saviour's injunction. "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." In the Church of England in many places daily services are being held during the whole season of Lent, which often lead to revivals of religion which are deep rooted, and the converts drilled in the great Scriptural truths concerning the teachings, principles and practices of Christ, the knowledge of which is as essential to an intelligent Christian life and a consistent Christian deportment as anything can be. It is the practice, though not

boasted of, that in every family circle of true Churchmen, there is during this solemn season the daily abstinence from something that will remind each one continually of the sacrifice of Christ. One will abstain from something most fond of as an article of diet, another from some desired amusement, another from something in dress, while another is determined to break off some habit which has not been pleasing or profitable. It is a common thing, in the inner circle of some warm friends, among young people, to converse together on the approach of Lent, to see what they individually had better do in the way of sacrifices during the lenten season. What can be more appropriate? In this way, some things that are abstained from are found to be conducive to health and happiness, and the abstinence is continued throughout the whole year, and it may be for life.

The season of Lent closes with the solemn fast on

GOOD FRIDAY,

when Christ's suffering and death on the cross are commemorated by special services. The passion lessons, prayers, hymns and collects are all appropriate for the occasion, and the day is kept holy. Then soon follows

EASTER SUNDAY,

when the glad anthems peal forth "Christ is risen from the dead; and become the first fruits of them that slept." Alleluia! Alleluia!

"Easter triumph, Easter joy,
Sin alone can this destroy;
From sin's power do thou set free
Souls new-born, O Lord, in thee.
Hymns of glory and of praise,
Risen Lord, to thee we raise;
Holy Father, praise to thee
With the spirit ever be."

There are several other seasons regularly observed by the Church, all of which teach the hearts of men

the blessed truths of the Gospel in a commemorative way that cannot be forgotten, and when after Easter comes Whitsunday, the mind is led to the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the light of wisdom, the witness which is to bear witness with our spirits that we are the children of God. Then follows, soon after,

TRINITY SUNDAY,

which leads the mind to the triune God, in all his works, and for twenty-five Sundays after Trinity, or nearly half the year, the whole scheme of salvation, through God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is so taught in the lessons, prayers and sermons, that there is no room left for doubt or uncertainty upon the great fundamental truths of Christianity.

CHAPTER XIII.

A state of suspense or uncertainty is one of anxiety and pain. When the doubt has relation to religion, it unsettles the mind, destroys peace, hope and faith, the three great links which connect the Christian to happiness. Every Christian should be able to give a reason for the hope that is within him. He should be a truth-seeker, and at all times ready to receive the truth from whatever source it comes and to whatever place it may lead; but it must be borne in mind that the highest attainments in human knowledge are never unalterably right. There is one source of knowledge only that is wholly accurate, and that is through Him

who is the Way, the Truth and the Life. There is but one unchangeable, almighty and omnipresent Being in the universe, and that is God. He is truth, He is holiness, He is spiritual beauty, He is justice, He is love. He is above the heavens. Man by searching cannot fathom Him. He is Light above all light that man can approach unto. Hence he is infinite. If he could be fathomed, he would be finite, and hence no God. It is in Christ and in him only that we see the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person. He came to reveal the Father. He and the Father are one. The Father is incomprehensible, the Son is incomprehensible, and the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, is incomprehensible. There is a Trinity and Unity and yet but one God uncreated, eternal, almighty and incomprehensible, as there are not three Gods but one God and three Persons in that one Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal. This is the Christian's God, and to doubt of His existence because of His incomprehensibleness, is ruinous to man's salvation. The most scientific men in the world cannot fathom many of the mysteries of physical law or mental action. God alone is crowned with infinite sovereignty over creation, which He controls by fixed laws, many of which the finite mind can grasp, but others which only the infinite knows. If then there are around us and within us such complex movements and vast mysteries that we cannot comprehend, is it reasonable to expect that we should be able to understand the infinite uncreated Being who brought us into existence? The Church of God on earth has a mission to fulfil, which is to establish the people in the faith of the Gospel. Preaching the Gospel to every creature is the great commission received from Christ the Head of the Church. It is the Church's highest glory to teach and preach the Gospel. The nearer to fixed

Scriptural forms of language and worship and the fixed Scriptural truths, the more eminently successful will the Church be in the establishment of the people in sound doctrine, and consequently the less room will be left for doubt and uncertainty. The Church that is least changeable comes nearest the Divine character, which is unchangeable, provided that it is fixed solidly on the foundation of Christ and his Apostles. The multiplication of religious sects has done more to unsettle the minds of thinking Christians than anything else. A religious denomination that has a creed and yet seldom or ever repeats it, soon loses sight of it and drifts away from the truth into some of the fields of modern scientific research, where God is ignored and Nature alone becomes the luminous heritage full of intellectual beauty and promise. The Freethinkers of this day glory in the unstable character of the teachings and principles of some modern divines, who from the authority given them by the Church to which they belong have "full control and discretion over all parts of religious worship" instead of being under the authority of some prescribed form and restraint. It is the business of Freethinkers to create doubt in the minds of Christians, hence they advocate changes, ignore creeds, laugh at fixed principles, stability, authority, and power, except it come from the subtle and daring investigation of nature, which sways to and fro on the troubled waters of doubt and uncertainty. Their glory is unsettling the minds of people on questions of theology to get them drifting out into the broad expanse of seeking truth everywhere without prayer to guide them, simply to rely upon their own intellect, the light of science and the works of nature. Now there are no men in the world who believe more in the grandeur of truth than those who constitute the Christian Church. Truth is our empire. It is the

crown that encircles every Christian's brow. It spreads out an array of splendid facts before us and tells us of God. It discloses the power from which we and all nature sprung. It tells us that God can, will and does care for us ; that He is our Father ; that he is loving, just, pitiful. That we are more to him than flowers or atoms. What can Freethinkers tell us that science has discovered for them concerning the character of God ? Nothing. Indeed by our method of investigation, they say, He is nothing—non-existent. Science can never discover an adorable Deity. Science is proving every day the validity of the Bible—it *cannot* find out God. Freethinkers do not like the Church, except so far as it may be seen to drift away from the truths of the Bible. Wherever a Minister of the Gospel is heard of that preaches some strange doctrine which unsettles the people's minds on the old orthodox teachings of the Church, his utterances are scattered broadcast among their clubs and published in their papers as evidence of the Church's departure from the Bible and its adoption of the new light. It is time the Christian Churches should anchor down to some more stable form of worship, and to unite upon some prescribed system of universal discipline that would preserve the pure Gospel truths from being handled according to the whims and fancies of men who are left to their own "discretion" in the way they shall conduct public worship. That great and godly man, Spurgeon, has said, "English dissent is honeycombed with infidelity." If this is true of English dissent, it is true of dissent generally and it is a well known fact that many free-thought clubs and prominent champions of infidelity are maintained by persons who had been at one time directly or nominally connected with some of the religious denominations outside the Established Church. Dissent is honeycombed with infidelity

because it is so much given to change. Infidelity is a system of change. It is a materialism that deifies matter through a process of change, asserts that it always existed, is connected with mind, and that even the incorporeal part of man is matter. It believes that changes have been constantly going on and are still going on in this world of matter, and that they have already resulted in evolving man from the lower animals, and will continue revolutionizing this material animal until angels are produced whose far off ancestors were monkeys. These highest intelligencies and all the most beautiful forms are all the result of change and not the work of an original and uncreated Deity. The more a Christian Church is given to change the nearer it approaches infidelity, whose alpha and omega is change. If anything in this world requires to be solidly fixed on an unchanging basis it is the Church. If the world sees no greater stability in the Church than it does in human organizations, then the world has reason to doubt of the superiority of the Church over human institutions. The Church is a high and holy structure. It is represented as a city on a hill that cannot be hid ; as a light on a candlestick to give light to all in the room. Its foundation is one that is deep-laid upon a rock. The winds may blow and the floods come, but they cannot move it, because it is on the rock of eternal truth. Do men wish to see this rock ? They asked Christ in his day to show them the Father. His answer was "He that have seen me hath seen the Father also." So those who see the Church established on the rock shedding forth its radiant light of inflexible truth, spiritual character, yearning pity and love for man, have seen the rock on which it stands. The Church rests on the Eternal Godhead. God's mind is sovereign and supreme law in the Church and not the whims

and fancies of man. God is good. The Church should be good and reflect the moral and spiritual character of Christ who gave imperishable permanency to right, to goodness, and to truth. Matter has no moral character. There is no moral radiance in all the beauty and grandeur of the star-lit heavens or the sea. A star can speak of mind but not of morals. A person alone can be moral; morality is not an attribute of things but of persons, so there is a difference between religion and morality, the latter being simply conformity to a law of right, while the other is essentially a relation toward a Person. Infidelity cannot even produce morality, because it deals with matter which is never spoken of as moral or immoral. Religion consists in the practical recognition of a constraining bond between the inward life of man and an unseen Person. It is when man has caught sight of the One Perfect Being, and in the effort to escape from the weakness and degradation of his own earthly life, "lifts up his soul" in faith to the unseen, all powerful and all beautiful Giver of Eternal Life, that he discovers the true ideal of life and realizes it. Religion is the constant spring and guarantee of moral'ty, and not morality the essence of religion. Practical religion is the greatest barrier to infidelity, and it is based on faith. Strong faith in God disperses the clouds of doubt and fear. It sheds a light that realizes the great wants of our time. It settles men's minds from the disturbing influences of false doctrine. It prevents us being borne on hither and thither amid the currents of opposing thought, like a ship without a rudder or compass, and pilots us safely into the haven of rest and peace.

Faith in God makes the preacher go forth and proclaim, it may be in trumpet tones, God's message to the world, calling men to repentance and inviting them to Christ that they may be saved. This faith

teaches the preacher that his sermons are not merely intellectual exercises and the pulpit a mere lecturer's desk, but that they are a Divine ordinance and deal with functions laid down in the Bible. The preacher who is actuated by faith goes about like his Lord and Master, doing good. His work is in his parish, looking after his people, as well as in the sanctuary, conducting the public services. In this way he can talk to the unwary face to face, meet the errors they may have incurred, guide them safely through difficulties, trials and temptations that beset them in this work-a-day world. How different is this to the worldly conformed system that so many professed Christians seek for every day. Where are the old paths? They are in the teachings and principles of Christ and his Apostles, and require no amendments to perfect them to man's necessities. They need no change. Every change leads to a variety of opinions about religion that causes other changes desirable. The great changes required in these times is to seek the old paths and walk 'herein' then there will be peace and progress, knowledge and culture, character and religion walking hand in hand; but to be as unstable as water, none will excel.



CHAPTER XIV.

THEIR POSSIBLE UNION.

Protestant union is a dream in which many able men are just now indulging. Uniformity of belief is advocated as a means most conducive to the growth and development of Christianity, while some glory in variety which breeds schism and multiplies sects. They go so far as to speak of variety in Christian beliefs as tending to life and activity, while it is death alone that knows no change. This is all very well from a scientific point of view, if the growth, expansion and decay of religion is taken on the same basis as the growth, expansion and decay of material things. But it is not. The idea we have of Jehovah is "I am the Lord, I change not." He is the only being who is without variableness or shadow of turning. Then his everlasting purpose is seen in the stability of the laws which regulate the material universe, it should teach a lesson of uniformity in Christian belief, so far as the essential attributes of His nature are concerned, the endless variety displayed in his sublime works, whose existence depend on the unalterable laws of order, grandeur and beneficence, we should be taught that upon uniformity and stability depend variety and expansion. There is in the Christian religion, more variety than can be found in all the multiplied systems combined that are outside the Christian Church. There is the grandest and most variegated scenery that can be witnessed anywhere. There is a variety to arouse attention, gratify the desire for novelty and fix the attention with untiring interest. But all this variety depends upon a fixed, unchanging, everlasting and omnipotent

God. So the Church of Christ does not consist of variety except as it conforms to the teachings and principles of Christ. All other variety leads to the increase and development of denominational systems and sects. The fundamental principles of the Church should be fixed upon an unchanging basis. This basis can be so broad that men may not be required to believe in every view—non-essential to the uniformity and stability of the basis itself. They may differ as widely as the poles in non-essentials so long as they unite upon the essential doctrines of the Christian religion as authorized by the Church to which they avow allegiance. If there is to be uniformity in belief, then the Unitarians may teach that Christ is not God as well as man. The Quakers may teach that there is no need of the Holy Communion or Baptism, for they ignore the Sacraments, the Calvinists can teach that Christ is not the Saviour of the world, but of a certain few ; the Plymouth Brethren may teach that there is no need of repentance or amendment of life, for all a sinner has to do is to believe that he is already saved ; the Romanists can teach that the soul goes to purgatory for refinement, while others can teach that there is no Judgment Seat of Christ, for Christians are not judged at all. This list of multiplied views might be continued until not a single truth of the Christian religion could be found but some one of the 200 religious sects would deny one or the other until there would be no visible Church of Christ left upon the earth if uniformity in belief is left an open question. The new-fangled religion that would seem to suit the world to-day and conform to infidelity is one that would leave us no Christ to worship nor Holy Ghost to make us good ; nor a Cross to trust in, no Sacrament to help us with power from on high ; nor a Divinely appointed Church to dwell in, nor Christ-sent ministers

to guide and teach, nor a Creed to set our faith by. If once we begin to throw away principles—not because we think them untrue, but because all are not agreed upon them—we cannot stop at any line of our own choosing. In common fairness we are bound to go on till we have done away with everything that distinguishes the Church based on the solid foundation of Christ and his Apostles, and yield to the various whims and fancies of the new patented religion that knows no end of change that may be invented and knows nothing of that “Faith once delivered to the Saints.”

It cannot be denied, but is gladly admitted, that great good has been done by many of the denominations who have separated themselves from the unity of the Established Church, and the Methodists, especially, have had evident signs that God has blessed their work in spite of their schism, but that does not detract from the belief that there is but one true and only Apostolic Church that is known by its maintenance of the Apostolic doctrine and discipline based upon the teachings and principles of the New Testament. The Church of England is not a creation of Parliament, for, as is claimed, it existed long before any Parliament was heard of in the country. It did not begin at the Reformation, and was not an offshoot of the Church of Rome, but was an organized Church with Archbishops and Bishops at least three hundred years before Augustine went to England, in the Sixth Century. At the time of the Reformation, it merely purged itself of the errors and superstitions which had been introduced from Rome. This old Apostolic, God-honored Christian Church, which has as its temporal Governor the Sovereign of England, and as its spiritual Governor the Lord Jesus Christ, instead of the Pope of Rome as its temporal and spiritual

governor, is the Church which the Methodists after the death of Wesley, their founder, separated from. At first, and for many long years, the Methodists carried on their work, which God blessed in a most marvellous manner, within the pale of the Church of England. There are, at the present day, large numbers to be found who desire to return to the Church of England. In all countries where the parent body and Methodists are found side by side in the field of evangelization, there is a great waste of money in keeping up division while the division itself is used against Christianity by its opponents. The question of union has been introduced again and again, but with no great success. Several prominent ministers and laymen have taken an independent stand and gone back to the old fold. They have adopted the reality of union and find the worship, the ordinances, the sacraments, and the devotion more reverent and superior than they had expected. This leads them to see the great difference that exists between an admirable liturgy and no prescribed form, but where "all parts of public worship are under the sole control and discretion of the preacher." The greatest difficulty in the way of an organic union of Methodists with the Church of England seems to be in the way of ordination of the clergy by the hands of the Bishop. This prevents many able ministers of the body from a union with the parent body, while others have conceded to its demands and stepped into the reality of Union. The Church considers itself unable to surrender this inheritance. In any amalgamation with other Christian bodies, this is held as a fundamental principle, which if diverted from would only lead to other changes, which the Scriptures and all the Church's historic continuity binds them not to depart from. The Methodists should not object to the appointment or authority of bishops, for their most

learned writer, Dr. Adam Clark, says in his notes on I. Tim., 3rd chap. : "Episcopacy in the *Church* of God is of Divine appointment, and should be maintained and respected. Under God there should be supreme governors in the *Church* as well as in the State. The *State* has its *monarch*, the *Church* has its *bishop*. One should govern according to the *laws of the land*, the other, according to the *Word of God*." The Episcopacy and the ordination of ministers by the hands of a bishop, in the forms prescribed in the Prayer Book, are not likely to be deviated from, when they are held as Scriptural and Apostolic. If otherwise held, there would be no harm in a departure from them, but when held so sacredly, they must be maintained. There are large numbers who, believing in the efficacy of faith and prayer, lift up their hearts to God for light in reference to their duty in this matter of joining the Holy Catholic Church, that expression signifying the Church of England, the universal Church of God, and where a study of the Church's literature, the Bible and Prayer Book, are combined with faith and prayer, there is little doubt but they will be led by the Holy Spirit to say, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God."

The only hope of union between the Methodists and the Church of England is by means of individuals returning to the Church from a solemn conviction of duty. Outward circumstances may conspire through God's Providence to lead many to join the Church of England, and to the enjoyment of all her blessed services, but, should such circumstances not come about, each person should study and "ask for the old paths, where is the good way ; walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls." From an experience of thirty years official connection with the Methodists, and, knowing how far they have drifted from the simple, original

plan laid down by their founder, I am convinced from what I know by personal experience of the Church of England, and by a study of its ethical character and scriptural doctrine, discipline and worship, that it contains more genuine Wesleyanism than the Methodists of to-day. There is more missionary spirit, more self-sacrifice, more cheap printing, more hard labor, more simplicity of dress, more Wesleyan nomenclature in Christian worship and experience, and more Christian liberality in the Church of England, than among the Methodists of to-day. A prominent Methodist missionary, the Rev. Dr. Eby, says: "We appear to have come to the end of our tether; our home efforts are starved, progress impossible, and over our foreign work, unless we move soon and move largely, we may as well tack up the ticket, 'for sale; they began to build but were not able to finish.'" The same writer says, "the only solution is in a radical reconstruction of the very soul of the whole undertaking—a conversion of the native power that will bring in a new missionary spirit." What does all this mean but a complete departure from the simple, original plan of Wesley, which plan was lying dormant in the Church of England for ages! The conclusion of the whole matter is this: that the Church of England is more Wesleyan than the present generation of Methodists. In consequence of this I find among prominent members of other denominations, men like the two whose opinions are given in the next chapter, share with me in this appreciation of the Church of England.

CHAPTER XV.

In the Presidential Address as Chairman of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, the Rev. Edward White gave utterance to the following remarkable testimony to the historical and national value of the Church of England :—

“It shall never be said that we have read English Church history with blind partisanship or are insensible either to the sentimental or solid attractions of the system from which we stand aloof.

“The Church of England, we know full well, has reigned over the mind of the British people not only in the prestige of a venerable antiquity, but has drawn men’s hearts to herself by an outward apparel of matchless beauty, while she carries in her right hand stability, and in her left hand riches and honour. Strong in her appeal to the intellect and affections of the English nation, she is yet stronger in her sway over the senses of the multitude, and in her hold upon the poetic impressionableness of the most poetic people under heaven.

“Great and noble buildings are everywhere formidable powers, and the sacred edifices of the Church exert an almost irresistible attraction to the imagination of their frequenters. These ancient cathedral towers rising in the midst of so many fertile counties, and consecrating from the centre so many an encircling panorama of forest and fruitful field and campaign territory—these ministers, and abbeys, and college chantries—these village temples, whether, as sometimes, new-built in all the magnificence of fretted stone and gilded pinnacles and storied glass, or, as more often,

grey with the hoar of ages and uplifting to Heaven spires that have withstood the tempests of centuries—are powers of subtlest mastery over all minds that are susceptible of tender impressions and noble dreams of beauty and mystery.

“And not the eye alone feels the resistless enchantment.

“In the ear of a people naturally musical, swells from north to south of England a gale of divinest harmony* from the 10,000 organs of cathedral choirs, college foundations, and parish churches, accompanying the voices of white-robed choristers, or the chosen singers of the congregation towards which stir all hearts, as they oftentimes recall the adorations and re-echo the prayers of ancient Christendom.

“Through all these churches rises the voice of the same Liturgy consecrated by many of the sweetest and noblest associations of the past, enshrining the essential truths of Christianity in the matchless language of the Tudors, enfolding all humanity in the breadth of its catholic intercessions, and lifting up the soul to God by its simple and antique sublimity. Who can wonder that this Liturgy soon won the hearts of former generations, and still—when uttered in natural tones—holds the hearts of the modern age; whether it soars to Heaven with outstretched wings of choral music from Canterbury or York, or from before the Confessor’s shrine in Westminster Abbey, or in mid-ocean from around the capstan pulpit, covered by the red Union Jack of Old England, while the voices of the winds and the waters murmur in soul-subduing accompaniment.

“But I go farther. For the masses of the English people are attached to their Church—whatever may be the taste of some modern clergy—from an intelligent appreciation of its largely Scriptural Protestantism.

They know little of genuine Popery who, in the heat of polemical injustice, charge its original constitution with semi-Romanism. Whatever faults may be chargeable upon the older Oxford reaction, let it be remembered that the ancient Church of England translated, distributed, and caused to be daily read in Churches, the sacred Scriptures, the *fountains of pure Christianity*; and under whatever lesser inconsistency in the application of the principle, has nevertheless written in golden letters over the portals of her sanctuaries that "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation; so that whatsoever is not read therein, or may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man that it should be believed as an article of faith or thought necessary to salvation." She had abolished the profane offering of religious homage to creatures instead of the Creator, and the idolatrous practice of rendering honour to images and pictures of saints departed. She has taken away, at least in intention, the doctrine of transubstantiation, and the sacrifice of the Mass; she has set aside the false doctrine on mediation, and plainly taught the truth of the Deity, the atonement, and the intercession of Christ. She has put away auricular confessions, penances, indulgences, and the correlated delusions of purgatory and intercession for the dead—and if these delusions are now upheld by some it is in defiance of her plainest instructions. She has in her rubrics discouraged excessive pomp in ritual, and taught her clergy, as married men, to identify themselves in every parish with the daily life of the people. She honours no relics, worships no angels, saints, or martyrs, arrogates no infallibility, and openly declares, in the preface to her Prayer Book, that her system admits of further and progressive reformation.

"This is not semi-Romanism. It is Protestantism—and the English people know it, and intend to preserve it. It is a religious system which, with all its faults, has, in conjunction with the labours of our persecuted predecessors, conferred signal benefits upon this nation, raising the intellect of England to a majestic strength unknown in any other country of the European Continent."

The following is from the able pen of the Rev. H. M. Fields, D.D., and shows what a Presbyterian says on the Church of England :—

"I am not an English man, nor an Episcopalian, yet no loyal son of the Church of England could look up to it with more tender reverence than I. I honor it for all that it has been in the past, for all that it is at this hour. The oldest of the Protestant churches in England, it has the dignity of history to make it venerable. And not only is it one of the oldest churches in the world, but *one of the purest*, which could not be struck from existence without a shock from all Christendom. Its faith is the faith of Reformation, *the faith of the early ages of Christianity*. Whatever "corruptions" may have gathered upon it, like moss upon the old cathedral walls, yet in the Apostles' Creed and other symbols of faith it has the primitive belief with beautiful simplicity, divested of all "philosophy" and held it not only with *singular purity*, but with *steadfastness from generation unto generation*.

"What a *power* is in a creed and a service which thus links us with the *past* ! As we listen to the Te Deum or the Litany we are carried back not only to the Middle Ages, but to the days of persecution, when "the noble army of martyrs" was not a name ; when the Church worshipped in crypts and catacombs. Perhaps *we of other communions do not consider enough*

the influence of a church which has a long history, and whose very service seems to unite the living and the dead—the worship on earth with the worship in heaven. For my part I am very sensitive to those influences, and never do I hear a choir “chanting the liturgies of remote generations” that it does not bring me nearer to the first worshippers and to Him whom they worshipped.

“Nor can I overlook, among the influences of the Church of England, that even of its architecture, in which its history, as well as its worship, is enshrined. Its cathedrals are filled with monuments and tombs which recall great names and sacred memories. Is it mere imagination, that when I enter one of those old piles and sit in a quiet alcove the place is filled to my ear with airy tongues, voices of the dead that come from the tablets around and from the tombs beneath; that whisper along the aisles, and float away in the arches above, bearing the soul to heaven—spirits with which my own poor heart, as I sit and pray, seem in peaceful and blessed communion. Is it an idle fancy, that soaring above us there is a multitude of the heavenly host singing now, as once over the plains of Bethlehem, “Glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good will to *all* men?” Here is the soul bowed down in the presence of its maker. It feels “lowly as a worm.” What thoughts of death arise amid so many memorials of the dead! What sober views of the true end of a life so sweetly passing away! How many thoughts are inspired by the meditations of this holy place! How many prayers, uttered in silence, are wafted to the Hearer of Prayer! How many offences are forgiven here in the presence of “The Great Forgiver of the World!” How many go forth from this ancient portal resolved, with God’s help, to live better lives! It is idle to deny that the

place itself is favorable to meditation and to prayer. It makes a solemn stillness in the midst of a great city, as if it were in the solitude of a mountain or a desert. The pillared arches are like the arches of a sacred grove. Let those who will cast away such aids to devotion, and say they can worship God *anywhere*, in any place. I am not so insensible to these surroundings, but find in *them much to lift up my heart* and to *help* my poor prayers. With these internal elements of power, and with its age and history, and the influence of custom and tradition, the Church of England has held the nation for hundreds of years to an outward respect for Christianity, even if not always to a living faith. While Germany has fallen away to rationalism and indifference, and France to mocking and scornful infidelity, in England Christianity is a national institution, as fast anchored as the Island itself. *The Church of England is the strongest bulwark against the infidelity of the Continent.* It is associated in the national mind with all that is sacred and venerable in the past. In the creed and its worship it presents the Christian religion in a way to command the respect of the educated; it is rooted in the universities, and thus associated with science and learning. As it is the National Church it has the support of all the rank of the kingdom, and arrays on its side the strongest social influences. Thus it sets even fashion on the side of religion. This may not be the most dignified influence to control the faith of a country, but it is one that has great power, and it is certainly better to have it on the side of religion than against it. We must take the world as it is, and men as they are. They are led by example, and especially by the examples of the great—of those whose rank makes them foremost in the public eye, and gives them a natural influence over their countrymen.

“Such is the position of the Church of England, whose history is as part of that realm, and which stands to-day buttressed by rank and learning, and social position, and a thousand associations which have clustered around it in the course of centuries to make it sacred and venerable and dear to the nation’s heart. If all this were levelled with the ground, *in vain would all the efforts of Dissenters*, however earnest and eloquent—if they could muster a hundred Spurgeons—*avail to restore the national respect for religion.*

“Looking at all these possibilities, I am by no means so certain, as some appear to be, that the overthrow of the Establishment would be a gain to Christianity in Europe.”

CHAPTER XVI.

THE MOTHER OF THE WESLEYS.

In the Gyneocracy of the Church of England such women as Rebekah, Rachael, Naomi and Ruth, Hannah, Abigail, Phoeby, Dorcas and Mary have their proper sphere. They are not given any pharisaic titles, no sounding names, but are held up as illustrations of large classes of noble women found in the world, who are making great sacrifices for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Mary has her proper sphere ; not deified, but held in honorable remembrance so as never to be forgotten, not worshipped but revered.

A woman with whom the Angel Gabriel held converse and pronounced blessed among women, should not be spoken of lightly, neither should she be worshipped nor made the intercessor between God and man, as "there is but one intercessor between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Neither is woman raised to the position of deacon or priest in the Church of God. The Church of England holds the primitive doctrine of St. Paul on this ground, and so did John Wesley, who did not agree with the Quakers who set aside the Apostolic rule. Wesley said "we allow the rule itself but admit some exceptions to it," and he only knew of two exceptions to the rule in his societies in forty years, those of Miss Bosanquet and Mrs. Crosby, and in these cases he was exceedingly careful. Mrs. Fletcher, wife of Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madely, and consequently a churchwoman, preached by times in public, showing that a few exceptions were admitted. Woman has her sphere of usefulness without taking up the position of public speaker except in some extraordinary cases. Woman's place is not in the pulpit, on political hustings or on the stage. She can wield her pen like the sainted Hannah More, who in the latter part of the last century, while so many recommended a secession from the Establishment, pursued a different course by remaining in it, like Wesley, Wilberforce and a host of others, but used their influence to extend genuine piety and save immortal souls. Hannah More's "Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education and in view of the Principles and Conduct prevalent among Women of Rank and Fortune" should be read even to-day, as it was a century ago, and much good would result, in showing the frivolities and dissipations of the age as dangerous to moral rectitude. The life of Hannah More was formerly circulated extensively among

Methodist families and the result was most beneficial. Woman's influence at home and among her children under the teachings of the Church may be illustrated by the life of the mother of the Wesleys. The following is part of a letter dated Epworth, July 1732, addressed to her son : " According to your desire, I have collected the principal rules I have observed in educating my family. The children were always put into a regular method of living, in such things as they were capable of, from their birth ; as in dressing and undressing, changing their linen, etc. The first quarter commonly passes in sleep. After that they were, if possible, laid into their cradle awake, and rocked to sleep ; and so they were kept rocking till it was time for them to awake. This was done to bring them to a regular course of sleeping, which at first was three hours in the morning and three in the afternoon, afterwards, two hours, till they needed none at all. When turned a year old (and some before) they were taught to fear the rod, and to cry softly, by which means they escaped abundance of correction which they might otherwise have had ; and that most odious noise of the crying of children was rarely heard in the house, and the family usually lived in as much quietness as if there had not been a child among them. As soon as they had grown pretty strong they were confined to three meals a day. At dinner, their little table and chairs were set by ours, where they could be overlooked ; but not to call for anything. If they wanted anything they used to whisper to the maid that attended to them, who came and spoke to me ; and as soon as they could handle a knife and fork, they were set to our table. They were not suffered to choose their meat, but always made to eat such things as were provided for the family. Mornings they always had spoonmeat ; sometimes at nights ; but whatever

they had, they were never permitted at those meals to eat of more than one thing and of that sparingly enough. Drinking or eating between meals was never allowed, unless in cases of sickness, which seldom happened. Nor were they suffered to go into the kitchen to ask anything of the servants, when they were at meat; if it was known they did so, they were certainly beaten and the servants severely reprimanded. At six, as soon as family prayer was over, they had their supper; at seven, the maid washed them, and beginning at the youngest, she undressed and got them all to bed by eight; at which time she left them in their several rooms awake, for there was no such thing allowed of in our house, as sitting by a child till it fell asleep. They were so constantly used to eat and drink what was given them, that when any of them were ill, there was no difficulty in making them take the most unpleasant medicine, for they durst not refuse it, though some of them would presently throw it up. This I mention to show that a person may be taught to take anything, though it be never so much against the stomach. In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done is to conquer their will and bring them to an obedient temper. To inform the understanding is work of time; and must with children proceed by slow degrees, as they are able to learn it; but the subjecting of the will is a thing that must be done at once and the sooner the better; for by neglecting timely correction they will contract a stubbornness and obstinacy which are hardly ever after conquered, and never without using such severity which would be as painful to me as to the child. In the esteem of the world, they pass for kind and indulgent, whom I call cruel parents, who permit their children to get habits which they know must afterwards be broken. Nay, some are so stupidly fond, as

in sport, to teach their children to do things which in a while after they have severely beaten them for doing. When a child is corrected it must be conquered, and this will be no hard matter to do, if it be not grown headstrong by too much indulgence. And when the child is totally subdued, and it is brought to revere and stand in awe of the parents, then a great many childish follies and inadvertencies may be passed by. Some should be overlooked and taken no notice of, and others mildly reprov'd ; but no wilful transgression ought ever to be forgiven children without chastisement less or more, as the nature and circumstances of the offence may require. I insist on conquering the will of children betimes, because this is the only strong and rational foundation of a religious education, without which both precept and example will be ineffectual. But when this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason and piety of its parents, till its own understanding comes to maturity, and the principles of religion have taken root in the mind.

Our children were taught as soon as they could speak, the Lord's Prayer, which they were made to say at rising and at bed time constantly ; to which, as they grew bigger, was added a short prayer for their parents, and some Collects, a short Catechism, and some portions of Scripture, as their memories could bear. They were very early made to distinguish the Sabbath from other days, before they could well speak or go. They were soon taught to be still at family prayers, and to ask a blessing immediately after, which they used to do by signs, before they could kneel or speak. They were quickly made to understand they might have nothing they cried for, and instructed to speak handsomely for what they wanted. Taking God's name in vain, cursing and swearing, profaneness, ob-

scenity, rude, ill-bred names were never heard among them ; nor were they ever permitted to call each other by their proper names without the addition of brother or sister. For some years we went on very well. Never were children in better order. Never were children better disposed to piety, or in more subjection to their parents, till that fatal dispersion of them after the fire, into several families. They soon learned to neglect a strict observance of the Sabbath ; and got knowledge of several songs and bad things, which before they had no notion of. That civil behaviour, which made them admired when they were at home, by all who saw them, was in a great manner lost, and a clownish accent and many rude ways were learnt, which were not reformed without much difficulty. When the house was re-built, and the children all brought home, we entered on a strict reform." Then follow several by-laws which were carried out in the management of her children. It is no wonder the Wesley family had rare excellencies. A Methodist father once said to me. "I should not like to bring up my children in the Church of England." His idea was that Mrs. Wesley was a Methodist and there were few women like her. On another occasion, a gentleman who had been a prominent Methodist official, but now a Church of England man and known as the Hon. Mr. —, said to me, "I should not like to bring up my children in the Methodist Church." The children of both these men are walking uprightly, for they both believe in the teaching and principles set forth by Mrs. Wesley. The old Church of England teaching was what made all that is good, great and grand about Methodism as sanctified by the spirit of God. Mrs. Wesley followed her sons to the university with her prayers and counsels. They proposed to her their doubts and consulted her in all their difficulties.

That could not have been a very dangerous university either that fostered such piety as the Wesleys displayed while there. If modern universities would turn out such men now-a-days as these, the world would be the better of them, but they want young men with mothers like the Wesleys'. Such mothers do more good, a thousand times, than flaming revivalist agents who are paid large money to periodically arouse the sensibilities and awaken the feelings of persons who, when awakened, have not the foundation of a well educated home training to anchor them to the truth by faith and sound doctrine. The early Methodist mothers, who were trained in the doctrines and ritual of the Church of England and brought up their children on principles such as Mrs. Wesley sets forth, exerted an influence that has taken generations to drift away from. What is needed to-day is a Union. The Church of England is necessary to inculcate a religion that is neither speculative nor sentimental but based on the firm foundation of Scriptural truth, having its seat in the understanding as well as in the heart, so that its reality may be evinced by appropriate fruits. Methodism is necessary to awaken those, who thus trained, may be content, without a sensible realization of faith and a living consciousness that they are saved. It was commonly said of Wesley in Ireland that he was a "Methodist and a member of the Church of England." Methodism requires to be joined with the Church and under its doctrine and discipline, like the "Dairyman's Daughter," converted by one of Wesley's missionaries, but trained in the church, and whose life was written by the Rev. Leigh Richmond, a godly clergyman of the Church of England, and of which 4,000,000 copies is said to have been sold up to the noon-day of this century and thousands converted by means of them. If the two were

combined in one great brotherhood, as formerly, without the prejudice that many in the Church had to Wesley and without the antipathy that the Methodists now have to the Church, what great and glorious achievements might be expected ! We might expect a nation to be born in a day. This Union will come in God's good time. Let all Christians use the following prayer which so often heads the editorial columns in most of the Church of England papers of the day.

PRAYER FOR UNION.

O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, our only Saviour, the Prince of Peace, give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great dangers we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice and whatever else may hinder us from godly union and concord ; that, as there is but one Body and one Spirit, and one Hope of our calling ! one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of us all, so we may henceforth be all of one heart, and of one soul, united in one holy bond of truth and peace, of faith and charity, and may with one mind and one mouth glorify thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord.—*Amen.*

THE END